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MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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THE LIFE AND ART OF RANDY "BISCUIT" TURNER OF THE BIG BOYS

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BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE: #148, 150-151, 153-154, 156 pts. 1 & 2, 160-163, 166, 172, 174-175, 179-181, 184-210, 214-216, 218-227, 229-284 **See page 4 for pricing and other info.**

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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

TIM BROOKS

- ARMITAGE SHANKS-Smash the Cistern!-EP
- OFF WITH THEIR HEADS-EP
- DICK CHENEY-Pa Mitt Rum-EP
- CARDIAC ARREST-Get Away….-EP
- THE RATS-We Are The Rats-EP
- BALLAST-Fuse-LP
- CHINESE TELEPHONES/THE POTENTIAL JOHNS-split LP
- PEDESTRIANS-Ideal Divide-12"
- STATUES-New People Make Me Nervous-LP
- DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR-LP

MITCH CARDWELL

- HIBACHI STRANGLERS-Our City Doesn't Stink All The Time-EP
- HEAD-No Hugging No Learning-LP
- ARMITAGE SHANKS-Smash the Cistern!-EP
- VEGATATIVE STATE-Cracker-EP
- SNAKE FLOWER-Turn Back Time-EP
- V/A-Messthetics #101-CD
- V/A-Killed By A One Man Band!-EP
- THE RETAINERS-Teenage Regrets-EP
- VILENTLY ILL-Where Is The Next Wave?-EP
- IMPEDIMENTS-live

ROB COONS

- DICK CHENEY-Pa Mitt Rum-EP
- CARDIAC ARREST-Get Away….-EP
- SLIGHT SLAPPERS-Vinyl Collection 1995-2001-CD
- PULLING TEETH-Vicious Teeth-10" EP
- THE RATS-We Are The Rats-EP
- CHARM/UG MAN-split LP
- THE RATS/SHUT THE FUCK UP-split EP
- PEDESTRIANS-Ideal Divide-12"
- THE QUEERS-Love Songs For The Retarded-CD
- HEAD-No Hugging No Learning-LP

PAUL CURRAN

- ANTI-JUSTICE/CHINESE TELEPHONES-split EP
- ARMITAGE SHANKS-Smash the Cistern!-EP
- BARSE/THE HEARTBURNS-split EP
- CHINESE TELEPHONES/POTENTIAL JOHNS-split LP
- FIFTH HOUR HERO/NAVEL-split EP
- OFF WITH THEIR HEADS-EP
- PEAR OF THE WEST-EP
- PEDESTRIANS-Ideal Divide-12" / SCHIFOSI-CD
- THIS IS MY FIST-A History Of Rats-LP
- V/A-Messthetics #101 & 102 CDs

JONATHAN FLOYD

- THE RETAINERS-Teenage Regrets-EP
- FIFTH HOUR HERO/NAVEL-split EP
- CHINESE TELEPHONES/POTENTIAL JOHNS-split LP
- HEAD-No Hugging No Learning-LP
- PEAR OF THE WEST-EP
- THE SHOEMAKERS-Turn Me On-LP
- THIS IS MY FIST-A History Of Rats-LP
- THE CRUMP-Leave Home-EP
- ANTI-JUSTICE/CHINESE TELEPHONES-split EP
- SNUGGLE/WHISKEY SUNDAY-split EP

LAYLA GIBBON

- PEDESTRIANS-Ideal Divide-12"
- NEW BLOODS-demo
- CULTURECIDE-Year One-CD
- THE RETAINERS-Teenage Regrets-EP
- MUTATORS-EP
- THE SHANKS-Cut Me-EP
- CONDENADA - live, food, + hangouts
- SQUIDS-live / SURF'S UP-live
- SEX VID/CULT LOGIC/JUMP OFF A BUILDING-live
- NO SLOGAN/GIANT HAYSTACKS/NTN-live

CHRIS HUBBARD

- PEDESTRIANS-Ideal Divide-12"
- VALSE TRISTE-Madon Luku-LP
- UNDER PRESSURE-12"
- SOCIALCIDE-Sick of the Pressure-demo
- DICK CHENEY-Pa Mitt Rum-EP
- CHINESE TELEPHONES/POTENTIAL JOHNS-split LP
- NO GOAL-Demo XXX-EP
- PERMANENT TRIP-Losing Ground-EP
- TOXIN III-1983 Demo-EP
- GIANT HAYSTACKS/NTN-live

KENNY KAOS

- DIRECT FROM HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY-EP
- BARSE/THE HEARTBURNS-split EP
- ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN/WHITE BARONS-split EP
- THEE GARAGEKID-Gets a Rekkid-EP
- SNAKE FLOWER-Turn Back Time-EP
- ARMITAGE SHANKS-Smash the Cistern!-EP
- OFF WITH THEIR HEADS-EP
- THE SHOEMAKERS-Turn Me On-LP
- THE SHANKS-Cut Me-EP
- JERK ALERT-Candy Ass-EP / HEAD-LP

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl or CD-only releases to the address on the previous page. See Demos section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

CAROLYN KEDDY

THEE GARAGEKID-Gets a Rekkid-EP	ARMITAGE SHANKS-Smash the Cistern!-EP
THE RETAINERS-Teenage Regrets-EP	THIS IS MY FIST-A History Of Rats-LP
THE KA-NIVES-Get Duped!-LP	HIBACHI STRANGLERS-EP
VIOLENTLY ILL-Where Is The Next Wave?-EP	THE GIANT ROBOTS-CD
JERK ALERT-Candy Ass-EP	VEGATATIVE STATE-Cracker-EP

WILL KINSER

BALLAST-Fuse-LP	NEW MODEL ARMY-live
BESTHÖVEN-Depois de um Ataque Aéreo-EP	THE DAMNED-live
NO REST-Todos Os Disfarces-LP	K-BAR-live
NO GOAL-Demo XXX-EP	SURRENDER-live
EFFIGY/HELLSHOCK-split CD	BAD REACTION-live

RAY LUJAN

FLAMINGO 50-Tear It Up-CD	THE RATCHETS-Glory Bound-CD
PEAR OF THE WEST-EP / BAD CO-CD	THE OBSESSORS-Double Scoop-CD
FIFTH HOUR HERO/NAVEL-split EP	J CHURCH/FLAMINGO 50-split EP
LEMURIA-45 / BONK-Bonk Against Nothing-CD	SECOND COMBAT-What Has Inspired Us?-EP
EVIL CONDUCT-CD / THIS IS MY FIST-LP	THE QUEERS-Love Songs For The Retarded-CD

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

STATUES-New People Make Me Nervous-LP	PEDESTRIANS-12" / HIBACHI STRANGLERS-EP
THIS IS MY FIST-A History Of Rats-LP	J CHURCH/FLAMINGO 50-split EP
ARMITAGE SHANKS-Smash the Cistern!-EP	ANTI JUSTICE/CHINESE TELEPHONES-split EP
CHINESE TELEPHONES/THE POTENTIAL JOHNS-split LP	PEAR OF THE WEST-EP / THE RETAINERS-EP
OFF WITH THEIR HEADS-EP	V/A-Messthetics #101-CD

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

PEDESTRIANS-Ideal Divide-12"	THE RETAINERS-Teenage Regrets-EP
V/A-Messthetics #101 & 102 CDs	THIS IS MY FIST-A History Of Rats-LP
BESTHÖVEN-Depois de um Ataque Aéreo-EP	NO SLOGAN/NTN-live
UNDER PRESSURE-LP	SEX VID/JUMP OFF A BUILDING-live
VEGETATIVE STATE-Cracker-EP	CONDENADA/OUTRAGED/BOOM BOOM KID-live

BRUCE ROEHRS

BONECRUSHER/OXYMORON-split 2xCD	BLOODY & THE TRANSFUSIONS-CD
DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR-LP / DICK CHENEY-EP	BONECRUSHER-Live at the Doll Hut-CD
EFFIGY/HELLSHOCK-Out From the Dark Side-split CD	V/A-Knockout…In The 8th Round-CD
EVIL CONDUCT-CD / THE RATS-EP	NO SLOGAN/GIANT HAYSTACKS/OUTRAGED-live
FOR THE WORSE--CD / NO TURNING BACK-CD	ROAD SIDE BOMBS-live

RYAN WELLS

OFF TO BE A MATURE ADULT OR SOMETHING...THANKS FOR EVERYTHING, RYAN!

ZINE TOP TEN

Absolutely Zippo #40	*Plopply Pants #5*
Beat Moter #6	*Pudd' Nhead #3*
Bullets #2	*Rad Party #37*
Dig It! #38	*The Rag #1*
Distort #11	*Treble High, Talent Low #1*

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A WHOLE CRAPLOAD OF MRR BACK ISSUES...

#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov '96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#174/Nov '97. Stratford Mercenaries, Lickity Split, Bladder, Piss Shivers, Barnhills, In/Humanity. "Education" theme issue.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Umlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct '98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, 3rd Party, No Class.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres.

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov '99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump 'N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April '00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#205/June '00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May '01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#221/Oct '01. The G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11, Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar '02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola & San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine , Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, The Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impractical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl,Vrah.

#252/May '04. Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaei Branchaw photos.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, scene reports from Portland, Boston and Germany.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04 The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, "Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

#262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scenes.

#263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

#264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

#265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

#266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

#267/August '05. Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech scene report, New Zealand scene report.

#268/September '05. Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

#269/October '05. Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

#270/November '05. Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oil!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid zine, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

#271/December '05. Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatality, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged / Criminal IQ / Kick'n'Punch Records. Scene reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

#272/January '06. Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, *Baboon of Sickness* zine. Scene reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

#273/February '06. Fuses, Endstand, Out Cold, Pedestrians, Acts of Sedition, BadEatingHabits, Western Addiction, Jesus Fucking Christ, Toxic Waste, Punk photo spread, St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

#274/March '06. Best of 2005, Formaldehyde Junkies, Brutal Knights, Kansan Uutiset, Hatred Surge, A-Heads, Manikin, Upinatem, Hips, Boston scene report, Punk photo spread.

#275/April '06. History of ABC No Rio (Part One), Ringers, Missbrukarna, '90s garage punk scumpit, Anatomi-71, After the Bombs, Rubella Ballet, RIP Pig Champion, Ricky Adam interview and photographs, Sean McGhee, Hard Skin US tour diary.

#276/May '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part One), History of ABC No Rio (Part Two), Vitamin X Asian Pacific tour diary, Soviet Valves Suburban Death Machine, Frustrations, George Hurchalla, Scene reports: Czech Republic and Greece.

#277/June '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part Two), Imperial Leather, Boom Boom Kid, Vitamin X Asian Pacific Tour (part two), "How to Make It Big!" by the Phantom Surfers, Magrudergrind, Poland.

#278/July '06. Billy Childish, Death Token, The First Step, Ramsey Kanaan of AK Press, Headache City, Deconditioned, Under Pressure, Insuiciety, Instigators, Malaysia Scene, Bay Area Scene Pics.

#279/August '06. Mika Miko, The Fall, Cardiac Arrest Digger & the Pussycats, Massmord, Insect Warfare, The Astronauts, Canary Islands Photo Spread, Four Slicks, The Fallout, PAWNS, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, & Umeå, Sweden scenes.

#280/September '06. Hjerte Stop, Grupo Sub-1, Desperate Bicycles, Bill Daniel interview and photo spread, APF Brigade, Disconvenience, Southkore Fest photo spread, Rosenbombs, Up the Voltage, Euro photo spread, Svartenbrandt, Asheville, NC & world wide punk scene reports.

#281/October '06. Out With a Bang, Redd Kross, Derek Lyn Plastic, We March, Alan Milman, Rat Traps, Blood Robots, The Scarred, Gilbert Switzer, Japan & US photo spreads, Sweden & UK scene reports.

#282/November '06. The Feelers, PESD, Toxic Ephex, Auktion, Bruise Violet, *Trust* fanzine, The Homosexuals, The Effigies, Rat City Riot, New York City, and North Carolina scene reports.

#283/December '06. Jay Reatard interview & photos, Crimes Against Humanity Records, A Touch of Hysteria, Doris Fanzine, Kvoteringen, '90s Punk Scumpit Part II, Black Chrome, The Dirty Water Club, photos, Tokyo scene report.

#284/January '07. Margaret Thrasher, 924 Gilman at 20 Years, Order of the White Rose, Regress, Subhumans (UK) Part One, Blank Its, Condenada, Genetic Control, photos, Syracuse & San Diego scene reports.

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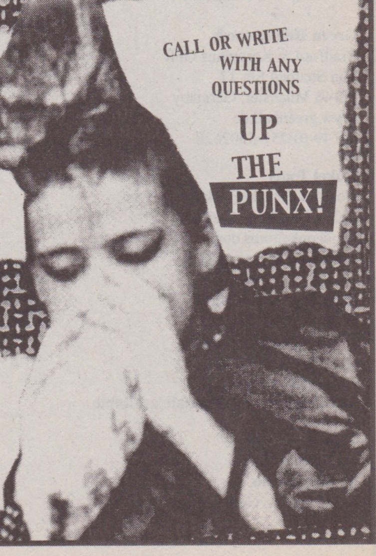

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LETTERS

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MRR—

Although most readers of MRR may have little remaining interest in the financial shenanigans of Lookout Records (yes, it does still exist, even if it doesn't pay royalties), the letter section of MRR seemed an effective way to notify those who are owed money by Lookout of certain findings, made in the course of our audit of Lookout, that may be of interest to them.

Lookout received a six-figure advance for electronic distribution rights from Emusic in 2000: this advance was pocketed by Lookout. Bands whose material was subsequently downloaded from Emusic were not informed that their material was being electronically distributed; the money due them as a result of these downloads never showed up on their statements; and that money was never paid to the bands (though Lookout has changed their claim that "all of the bands were paid" to "some of the bands were paid," their record of sloppy bookkeeping and dishonesty makes even that assertion doubtful).

In fact, Lookout denied that they were licensing material for electronic distribution until several bands noticed that their Lookout-licensed material was available from various download sites. Lookout briefly turned apologetic when they could no longer deny that they were licensing the material for electronic distribution, later taking the position that the bands had no right to know about any such agreements.

After other stalling tactics were exhausted, one of Lookout's owners wrote in August of 2004 (in an email posted by the recipient on the Lookout website message board): "Lookout is currently in the process of getting an accounting for all sales history. As soon as we have this, we will process the information and send out a special statement and payment for this income. Subsequently we will incorporate reporting for any music purchased by subscribers into future royalty statements."

Having been caught with the proverbial meat in their mouth, Lookout bowed to the inevitable and began posting download revenues on their statements from the third quarter of 2004 (although in at least one case, statements went from being chronically late to simply not being sent); despite their claims that the downloads for which they'd already been paid (starting in the latter half of 2000) would be included on later statements, our audit found $1500 due to us that had never been reported. Mind you, that's $1500 for the Phantom Surfers: there's doubtless much more owed to more legitimate bands.

It should be noted that, in February of 2006, another of Lookout's owners had claimed that, in the second quarter of 2005, Lookout, "Did another big catch up where you will have several line items in the 'adjustments' for three quarters of digital sales bringing the reporting up to current": the statements they later provided us for said quarter had no such adjustments, in fact falsely claiming that there were no download revenues whatsoever during that quarter and that the total royalties due each band member was less than seven dollars. Exactly when the catch up previous to the date of this other, nonexistent, catch up was supposed to have happened is another mystery that is apparently to be explained away as another instance of Lookout's good-natured bumbling rather than an active attempt to defraud bands of their royalties.

Further evidence of Lookout's dishonesty is that one of their stated reasons for taking more than seven months to provide the requested information was that some of their records of electronic distribution revenues were buried in some storage space while others had to be re-obtained from the digital distributors: so much for the claim that they were working on including that information in future statements and paying the money owed to bands.

Having also insisted upon receiving the missing statements with all other pertinent financial information, since we felt sufficiently imposed upon by this time to put aside our previously kindly feelings towards Lookout, we found that recent statements from Lookout employed an intriguing bit of financial jiggery-pokery by which certain royalties are withheld for some unstated purpose (not tax related). In reviewing these statements, we found that by ignoring the withholding sections and simply adding up the amounts Lookout admits to owing for each quarter, we stumbled over another several grand of revenue (though even this is short of the true total, given the discrepancies between their statements and those of the download providers).

It seems doubtful that we will ever collect any of this money (but if we do: PARTY AT MY HOUSE!), which is one reason that we've failed to pursue this matter beyond the occasional query for the several years that it's been obvious that was in dire financial condition (though Lookout has now managed to scrape together the change to retain a "hip" entertainment lawyer to stridently parrot their demonstrably false claims of above-board dealing: presumably, this is cheaper than actually paying bands the money that they're owed). But, since there is recurring scuttlebutt to the effect that Lookout is looking to sell its catalog to an Evil Big Corporation (as opposed to a Cool Ethical Corporation such as Sympathy or Lookout…eh, never mind) and Lookout holds the copyright to many of the records they've put out (by misrepresenting themselves as employers of the bands and the albums as works-for-hire), bands may well be interested in pursuing the path stipulated in Lookout's contracts for regaining control of their material.

The easiest way to do this is to figure out how much Lookout owes (for downloads from the third quarter of 2000 through the second quarter of 2004, this will entail scheduling an audit at Lookout's new office in San Francisco and copying the information down by hand from Emusic's reports), then send Lookout a letter (certified with return receipt) demanding payment. For the unreported download revenues, interest is certainly appropriate (the 12% annual interest rate for unpaid royalties specified in the standard Lookout contract would seem appropriate). After 180 days of nonpayment, send notice to Lookout terminating your relationship with them.

It's important that all communication with Lookout be done via certified mail with return receipt: after more than a year of first contacting Lookout via email regarding their non-reporting and non-payment of revenues, they invoked our failure to mail our demand, as contractually specified, as reason for not allowing us out of our contract (perhaps they

figure that a few albums of surf music will increase the value of the back catalog to prospective buyers, which would certainly be in keeping with the financial acumen Lookout has demonstrated in recent years). More fool us, for apparently putting some sort of store in clause 15 of the Lookout contract: "LOOKOUT and ARTIST agree to treat each other with respect and openness at all times and recognize that the truest contract is one based on trust and friendship."

At any rate, we've sent in our demand for payment to Lookout ("Pray in one hand, shit in the other, and see which one fills up first"), received the proof of delivery, and are now marking off the 180 days until we will be free of that trust and friendship. Good luck to any other bands embarking on that same road.

Incidentally, once the contract has been officially breached by Lookout, you'll be free to take them to Small Claims court, rather than the more expensive arbitration specified in said contract, if you want to attempt get whatever money they owe you. And if they claim to have made payments that do not jibe with your records, demand proof (as in a cancelled check) as Lookout has made false claims of payment before, though we can hardly doubt that those were just more innocent mistakes on their part.

Yours truly,

—The Phantom Surfers

MRR—

I went to a show over the weekend in Connecticut, where I live, put on by some really nice people, but I'll get to them later. In addition to the four bands that played, Mykel Board did readings from his new book and totally blew everyone away. I am 29 and have been reading *MRR* off and on for the last 15 years. About a year ago, I started reading it again on a more regular basis and while I was in the middle of an issue, a friend called me on the phone and said, "What are you doing?" I replied, "Reading an angry letter in MRR—someone complaining about a Mykel Board column." He replied, "Still?!"

I agreed it is funny that after all these years, Mykel is still pissing people off. You would think of all people that *MRR* readers would just get used to it already, although I don't think Mykel wants them too!

Anyway, without being a completely gushing fan, I will just say that Mykel Board is one of the smartest, funniest people I ever had the pleasure of experiencing, and I'd like to thank him as well as MRR for providing the monthly medium in which we can read all the great writing. In closing, I would also like to thank the people that booked the show and have been putting on some really good ones in the Connecticut area over the last year and a half or so. If you'd like to play in this neck of the woods, I would suggest you get in touch with them at www.myspace.com/rockyersocks-booking or write to me and I will point you in the right direction,

—TZ Glitter

tzglitter@gmail.com

Dear Ryan Punxxx—

Hello, my name is Todd and I just finished reading your letter in the December *MRR*, which was a response to mine from September. For starters, I would like to say that I am not a "kid" as you repeatedly called me in the letter. I am 30 years old and have been in punk bands, booked shows, and produced zines for over fifteen years. (So "yes" I have done 50 issues of a zine, smartass.) You should probably do some research before you start insulting someone and making half-assed accusations.

And, before you complain about something, you should make sure that it was something that was actually said. I *never* wrote that Ebullition "does not deserve to be in MRR" nor did I speak ill of Alternative Tentacles. I was talking about *HearattaCk*'s policy of not reviewing records with barcodes, (which I said I liked, I might add) & I just brought up the fact that it makes no sense to refuse to review a record with a bar code if you're going to sell them in your distribution catalog. I used Alternative Tentacles as an example, because I know that they use bar codes and I saw a few titles of theirs in the Ebullition distro list.

You also called me a kid who wants to starts fights, but you seem rather to quick to get into one yourself. I simply read an article where Lisa—not Kent, who you seemed to be defending even though I never even mentioned his name—was interviewed and I expressed my opinion about it. I didn't like what she said about Mordam and Lumberjack looking for the next big thing when Ebullition carries every flavor of the month punk record. I know people that have worked for both of those companies who are completely dedicated to DIY. You say you don't like "biting comments" and "shit talking" so what do you call what you did? When I wrote that letter, I just wanted to speak my mind. I was not angry, nor trying to "call out" anyone. In fact, I just bought a used copy of the *Give Me Back* comp. Guess what label that's on?

—Todd Tadsmore

Hey Maximum—

I'm writing because I sent you my band False Alarm's CD for review in last month's issue, which it did [get reviewed]; it was a real good CD with Cheetah Chrome from the Dead Boys, Rick Wilder from the Mau Maus and Berlin Brats, and De De Troit from UXA all as guests, plus Paul Kostabi from Youth Gone Mad who is our guitar player, plus me, our singer, Dylan Maunder who died unfortunately before it was released and Art Chianelo on drums. It was a good album Dee Dee Ramone and Paul our guitar player painted the cover. I worked hard to produce all this...the reviewer in your zine said horrible things and didn't even mention Rick's first appearance in years on a CD, and told people it was no good. I know for a fact you get tons of garbage sent to you all the time that gets satisfactory reviews. That's all I wanted was for you to say. It was interesting at least. Something of interest. Or satisfactory. Not garbage like the kid reporter. I'm trying to help the punk scene and do something good that I feel good about and trying to make my money back like you. I spent 1000s on the CD and I give them all away too. I put it out myself. It will be a long time till I break even. Anyhow, I'm sure there's nothing you can do but I just thought I would tell you it wasn't nice. I am grateful to you that you interviewed my band a while ago because Fat Mike used to be in the band but that CD truly was bad, but this one was not, it was very good I think. But if it wasn't good I would admit it. Anyways I just wanted to write to tell you I didn't like that but what's happened happened alright then goodbye for now

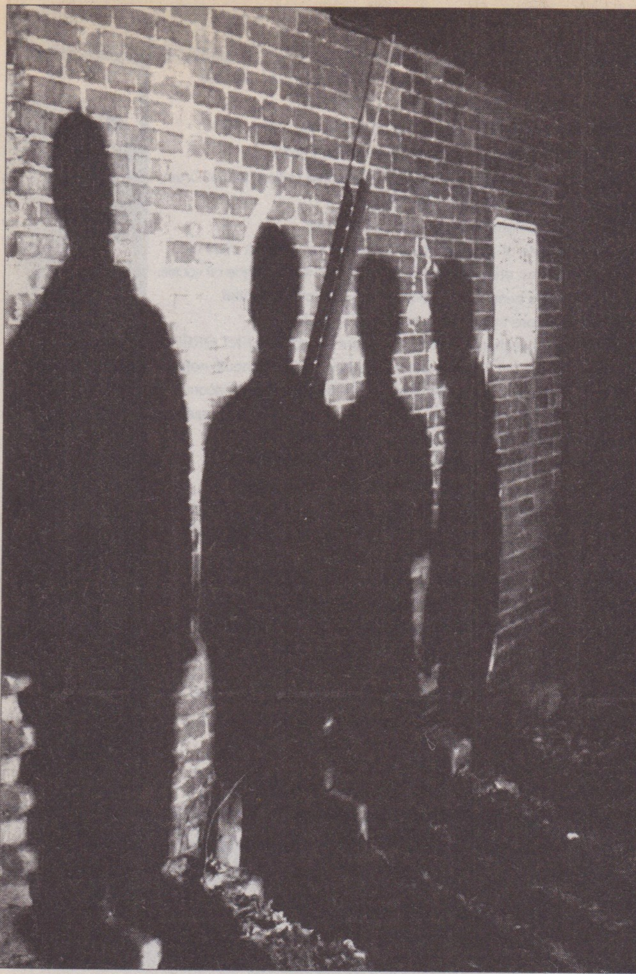
—Brent Alden

MRR—

I saw you guys taking some heat about reviewing demo tapes and CD-Rs in a different section than regular reviews and I just wanted to say that I think it's awesome that you even take the time to review demos or short run (CD-R) releases.

With the rise of cheaper recording techniques, MP3s, the web, and the generic growth and popularization of punk music, more and more people seem to think that all CD-R releases are shitty or not good enough to put out "for real." Many places don't acknowledge CD-Rs or tapes at all. While many of them may be great I just wanted to say thanks for covering that stuff in MRR. Much love to demo reviewers! Tell 'em thanks for me!

—(A different) Sam



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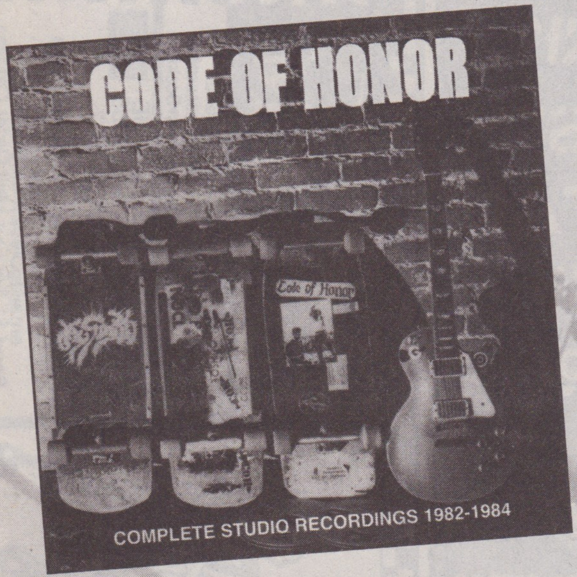

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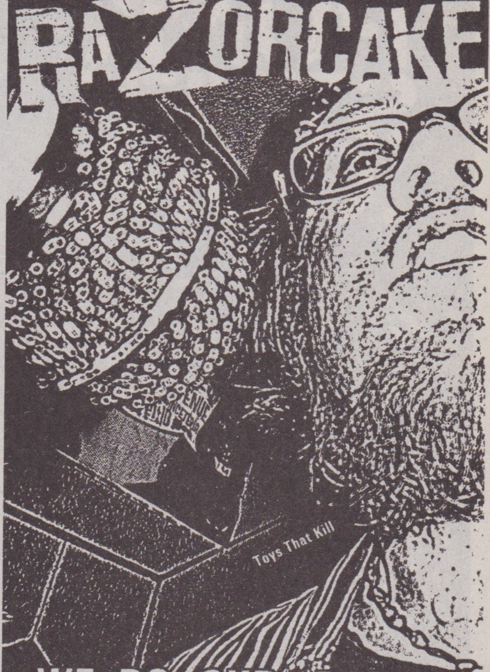

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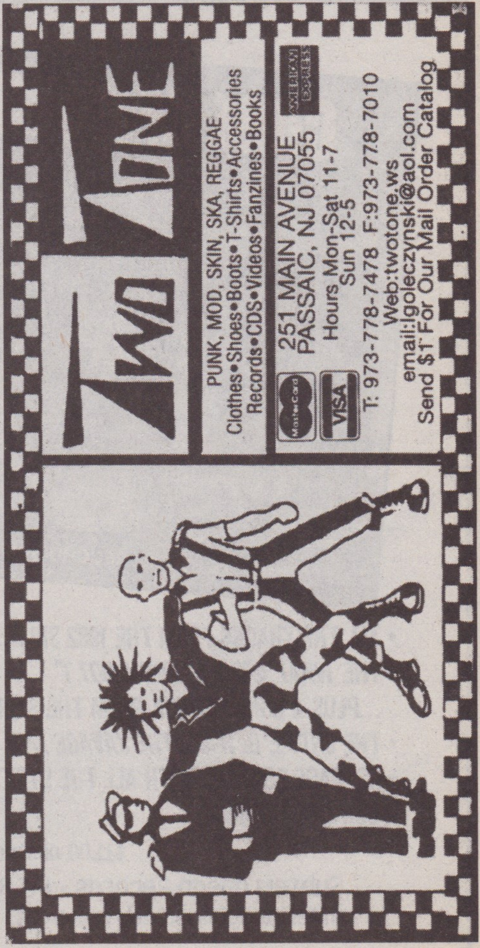

COLUMNS

Last month, I left off promising a Top Twn Tour Highlights. But to call each of the ten a highlight would be misleading, as that would lead you to assume the list would be made up of majorly significant and especially interesting details. As anyone who's been on tour can tell you, it's not all that. There are inevitable lowlights—the driving, driving, driving, the eating when you can, the warm cans of PBR.

So let's just call the list **Ten Glimpses Into the Tour That Gave Me a Whole Heap of Kindling for my Mama Fire.**

But first, let's cover the basics:

Who: Me, my 8-month-old baby, two tag-team roadie-nannies, and the band, Citizen Fish.

What: Two-week West Coast tour with Leftover Crack and the Sainte Catherines, otherwise known as Cracktoberfest 2006.

Where: Richland, Spokane, Seattle, Portland, Eugene, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Ventura, LA, Victorville, TJ, El Cajon, and Corona.

When: October 28 – November 9, 2006

Why: Because I needed to.

How: Because baby still nurses like a baby and goes wherever I go and because it was too expensive for the band to rent a proper tour van, we rented a mini-van for them and a car for the roadie-nanny, baby and me.

1. **The Roadie-Nannies** – First, because without them, I would not have been able to pull this whole thing off, the tag-team roadie-nannies—my mom and my friend Adriana. My mom was on the first week of the tour and Adriana joined me the second week.

A word about my mom—she's a newly retired, 33-year veteran third grade teacher who was out to broaden her horizons and help me out at the same time. Though out of her element and still not sure why I'm into "the whole punk thing" as she calls it, she was a real trooper. From helping drive and taking care of the baby when I was playing to only one meal a day and sleeping on stranger's couches, she hung in there. There was only one punk house that was too filthy and gross for her, "The Flower Shop" in Eugene. And her biggest disappointment was not being able to actually watch us play (because she had to keep baby out of the noise). Being on tour with my mom gave me a little insight into one of my old tricks, too. She was never without her bottle of wine that she snuck in to the clubs. And another thing, I once overheard her talking to my dad on her cell phone saying, "Yeah, everyone looks like shit, but they're all perfectly nice."

Adriana was more in her element than my mom was and being a midwife, was even more in her element when it came to taking care of the baby.

Since we're planning on another two-week tour in March on the East Coast and neither my mom nor Adriana will be available again, if you or anyone you know wants to be my hero roadie-nanny, come on!! Baby will be 13 months old. And I'll still just be old.

2. **The Bands** – The hugest high-fives go to the Sainte Catherines. They were amazing enough to let the back of their van be turned into a quiet room for the baby to sleep when there were no other options available *and* were mindful enough to keep their voices low when they needed to be in the van, too. And dudes, sorry she peed all over your blankets back there!

Leftover Crack, Skarp, Valid Effort, Born/Dead, Jesus Fucking Christ, and Intro5pect also rocked! I hadn't been to a proper punk show for so long, I was as giddy as the youngins in the crowd seeing these bands play.

3. **The Places to Stay and the Food Shared** – Without several friends letting me crash in on them by dropping off my baby and my mom before the show, things would have been much, much more difficult to juggle. Thank you David in Spokane, Gloria in Portland, Kate, Ramsey, Richard and Amy in Oakland, a three-night stay at Hotel Mike in Walnut, and a two-night stay with Shannon in Temecula.

4. **The Baby Haters** – Sometimes, when we didn't have a place to stay arranged beforehand, I obviously brought the baby to the show. If there were a backstage area that was a bit quieter and not smoky, I'd hang out with baby back there until it was time to play. Sometimes, I overheard things like, "Who'd bring a baby to a show?" and "Yuk, I hate babies." I put a muzzle on my usually sarcastic self, resisting the urge to respond with, "Uh, a mom in the band, that's who," and "Don't forget you were one once," respectively. When I was wha-waaing what I'd overheard to Karoline and Phil, Phil ever so tactfully gave me some perspective, "You were probably saying those same things ten years ago." I hated to admit it, but he was right.

5. **The Freak Out** – Smack dab in the middle of the tour, I had one of the most ridiculously busy days ever. It went something like this: wake up in Oakland tired, have breakfast with Kate, Richard and Amy, drive into SF to Fat for pizza and pictures, drive to Palo Alto for a family visit with Great Uncle John and Mollie, drive to San Jose to drop my mom and baby off at a hotel close to the airport where my mom would be flying out of in the morning, then drive alone to Santa Cruz to the show. On my way there, I got totally lost. And I totally lost my mind. I was convinced that my attempting to do what I was doing rendered me officially and certifiable totally fucking nuts. I was ready to give up right then, to find my lost ass's way back to the hotel where I had abandoned my sweet baby in favor of a vet hall punk show, sleep, and just go home in the morning. But just as I swallowed that half a bottle of Rescue Remedy to keep my head from spinning 360-degree style, I found the road I needed to get me to Santa Cruz and got there in plenty of time. Robert saw my frazzled ass pull up and promptly fetched me a warm can of Natural Light. I reclined the

driver's seat and took a moment with that very necessary warm beer before emerging to get ready to play.

After playing, I again knew why I was going through all the extra arranging to be on tour with my baby. The show gave me clarity and it all made perfect sense. Punk's always had a way of doing that throughout my life.

The next day wasn't any more relaxing. I had to wake up extra early to get my mom to the San Jose airport at 8:00 a.m. But thanks to Robert, the male half of Team Collins, roadie extraordinaires, I got through it without losing my marbles again. He knew that I, now on my own with my baby strapped in the backseat, then had to haul ass to LA, a mere several hundred miles away, to pick up Adriana at the LA airport and then backtrack to get to the show in Ventura. So he volunteered to not only drive with me but to do all of the driving himself so that I could sit in the back to keep my baby company and nap when she napped. Calling him my hero sounds like a gross understatement.

5. **The sleep deprivation** – It was just plain ridiculous how fucking tired I was for two weeks straight and I wasn't even in on any party action to speak of. Imagine waking up with baby at 7:00 or 8:00 a.m. every morning, being with her for a couple hours until she was ready for her morning nap, missing that glorious naptime because I was busy driving, stopping for food, driving some more, missing the afternoon nap, hanging out wherever we were trying to keep a busy, crawling baby safely and happily occupied, getting her to sleep before I went to play, playing, hanging out a bit afterwards, but always leaving earlier than everyone else, and finally getting to sleep around 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. Short night sleeps were about four hours, the longest was seven, and the baby waking up to nurse interrupted all of them every two or three hours.

After tour, it took me three days to recuperate and catch up on sleep to a point where I felt able to fully function again. It sucks getting old. Sleep deprivation + not eating as well as I do when at home = fighting a sore throat and an annoying cough.

6. **The happiness** – Feelings akin to sheer joy and overwhelming happiness washed over me several times throughout the tour. Loving the fact that there exist literally thousands of punks in cities like Seattle and San Francisco had something to do with the shit-eating grin plastered across my face—loving the fact that there are even tens and hundreds of punks in every small town to medium-sized city, too. The dancing and displays of raw energy blasting full throttle also had a big something to do with it. At punk shows, I feel comfortable, like there's something really special happening where I can be myself, sheltered from the outside world where the squares are, and since becoming a mama, I just don't get out as much as I used to or would like to. So tour was an extra special treat, an opportunity I worked hard to make happen so I wouldn't be sitting at home pouting, feeling resentful that having kids makes everything harder. The crown jewel of these soul-filling moments on tour was in Victorville, a town that from the outside looked like a place I'd never want to visit again but on the inside at the show, was filled with the most awesome energy. Being in the middle of that crowd, dancing like no one was watching, was pure, fluid fun that'll keep me filled for a good while.

7. **The 15 year-old's first show** – For two nights, I used my childhood friend Shannon's house in Temecula as home base. She has two teenaged kids, one of whom, Brett, likes punk music, but who had never been to a real punk show. He told me he had seen the Violent Femmes with his mom two years ago. I told him that didn't count. So it was his mom Shannon's idea to sign him out of school early so that he could go with me to the show in El Cajon. She grabbed his dad's old sleeveless army jacket with a big circle-A spray painted on the back for him to wear to the show. I remember his dad wearing that jacket in high school. Brett kept it in the trunk of the car. At the show, held at the Masonic Temple in El Cajon, Brett's eyes were wide taking it all in and loving the bands, Intro5pect especially. He loaded up on merch and wondered if he'd get in trouble for coming home with a Leftover Crack shirt. He had a great time but I about had a heart attack worrying that he had gotten caught in the middle of the pepper spray-filled near-riot. I could just picture me having to nurse his eyes back to normal and having to tell his mom he'd gotten sprayed during a brawl. Thankfully, he escaped the mess and he didn't get in trouble for the shirt either. His mom said he's forever impressed.

9. **The old and new friends** – No tour is complete without them. It's great to catch up with people you haven't seen in a while and great, too, to meet new people. This time around, I met several other punks who have kids just like I do. One of them, Ara, Leftover Crack's drummer, is papa to a two-and-a-half-year-old girl, and he promises to make his voice heard in the column next month – so stay tuned for that!

10. **The band** – Dick, Phil, Jasper, Silas and roadies Karoline and Robert are the best. They inspire me, make me laugh, write songs I love and sing lyrics that make a difference. They live DIY punk and are in it for the long haul. And for them to think my playing with them adds enough to be worth bringing not only me on tour, but me with my baby and roadie-nanny extra baggage to juggle, too, I can not thank them enough.

Punkparents, get in touch.

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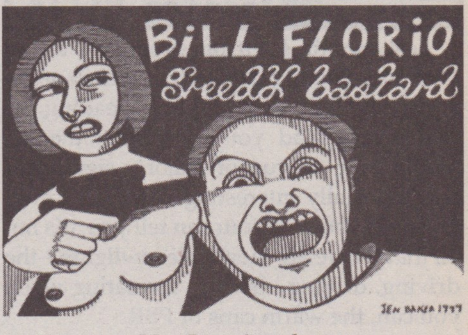


Not Just Another Typical Fat People Article

A new law just passed in NYC where it will be illegal for restaurants to sell you anything that contains Partially Hydrogenated Oils. You know, Crisco. Basically most of the junk food you eat contains a whole hell of a lot of this stuff. Yes, if you eat it every day chances are you will live a lot shorter. There's no debate there.

Now, as the largest city in the nation, it does seem to make sense to get on health issues a little more aggressively than, say, some bumfuck hick place like New Jersey. There are 16 million people working on an island 20 miles square during a weekday. That's a lot of cramped busses and subways and a lot of sweaty elevators to stand in. Despite the inconvenience of fat people dying around you, which is fucking gross, there's also the problem of them sweating, baloney sandwich belching and farting around you, and believe me if they aren't blasting the toilet stall next to you or turning an elevator into a gas chamber, they're crop dusting the whole office complex. The Hydrogen much like the Hidenberg sends them crashing and burning and killing.

As a side note I use to thing "felching" was a combination of belching and farting. I was horribly mistaken.

Crisco is in the same boat as the tobacco

industry as far as outward public general disapproval. It's terrible for you, and it's one of the reasons there are far more lazy, depressed, diseased Americans than the hard working tough people that our grandparents were. The thing Crisco has going for it is that it can re-invent itself, and already has—there are plenty of non-hydrogenated fat alternatives on the market which use different processes, and some even taste better, like coconut oil yum (good to make popcorn with). Crisco has even produced one. Crisco was never intended for deep frying, it's just cheaper than pure vegetable oil.

The thing is, if you're making fluffy pastry, certain breads, and cakes—especially pie crusts—you can't use fucking olive oil. It tastes like shit in baked goods and feels wrong in your mouth. It even makes certain things look unappetizing and limp. The real truth is, cooks didn't use Crisco because it tasted better at all, they used it because it retains shelf life, and you can leave those croissants in the bin an extra day instead of tossing them. Crisco was invented to save housewives time and money in their baking as well as to supplement the mass market snack industry's need for a cheap solid fat that stayed fresh tasting for weeks. But the truth is your great grandma's cooking tasted better, and that reason was she made her own fat. That fat is called Lard.

So, all you hippies who insisted on eating Hydrox instead of Oreos in the '80s are to blame for even more bad health as anyone else. All of ya who got all in a huff about McDonalds tasty fries being tasty because of them being fried in lard made things much much worse on everyone (they fry 'em with Crisco and meat flavoring) and now I'm gonna find myself giving some disgusting obese person CPR—always ruining my day, these hippies. The funniest thing is in New York City, the people in charge of these health lobbies are all Jewish—they set up the original media campaigns to demonize lard since they will go to hell if they eat it, and now they are heading the Trans-Fat ban, which will ultimately put pork right back on their plate.

As an anti-Semitic side note, this also is the story with MSG. Jews love Chinese food and they love to complain about how they have aches and pains and illness. Here comes MSG as their savior. All Chinese food has MSG in it; just because it's concentrated doesn't mean it's not naturally in soy sauce and seaweed. If you're allergic to it, don't eat it. I don't wanna hear you pushing for litigation where you really just need to stop eating food that gives you a migraine. It's really all about wanting to fight with Asians. At least the Asians have the sense to be outwardly racist instead of hiding behind food allergies to show it. Look buddy, if you wanna follow some phony baloney dietary laws, restaurants that serve shrimp and pork in 80% of their menu items are sending you a clear message—read it. You can take up the fight at the Dry Cleaners instead. MSG is fine; it's also the reason you're hungry an hour later.

It seems the smoking ban cancelled out the no hanging outside ban that I was complaining about for years. Now I'll be able to avoid bad bands and get a great slice of pie while doing so!

I, for one, applaud the re-emergence of lard. I mean, for one, if I'm gonna eat something bad for me (pretty much anything fried or baked is really not healthy anyhow and you really shouldn't be eating any of it every day of the week), I want it to live up to its full potential. Most restaurants use butter where at all possible anyway, ban or no ban. The second fact is that lard doesn't retain the shelf life, so if I get a slice of pie at a good place, it's going to be ultimately fresher, since lard goes rancid much quicker. This means more pain on dumpster divers as well! The last thing is lard is not only healthier than Crisco (this is all relative) it happens to be healthier than butter as well, and a good bakery or restaurant will probably save even more money rendering their own instead of buying mass-produced stuff. Truth is, your favorite pie is probably already made with lard and the baker will just lie about it if you sound like someone whiny who'd complain and then order it anyway. Desserts have that power over us sometimes.

This reminds me, another pet peeve of mine is people who order off the menu in general, whether it is because they are vegetarian or have some other insane dietary restraints. If you order off the menu it should be implied that you ordered a gob of spit atop whatever you wasted the cook's time with. Cooks and restaurants have a system; if you fuck with this system and you get everyone upset, not only will the food take longer to be delivered, but everyone else at the table is probably going to suffer from your pickiness with time and unwanted saliva.

On another topic, I'd like to remind everyone that the future of small punk shows has been extended another 30+ years due to this war going on. I'm sure a lot of VFW halls were considering closing around the year 2020 or so. If I look back at small town punk shows I've played and attended that were too large for a house and in places that didn't have a club that catered to an all ages crowd, 80% of them were at VFW halls. It seems VFWs are most cool about having such events where whenever it was an Elks or Moose or Masons, it's more about having some kid whose dad belongs. Lots of kids have Vet dads, myself included.

In fact, my dad is very well liked in his community, probably because my grandpa was always in charge or trying to be in charge of his local VFW. Now that I think of it, they both belonged to two halls. One was more about being a vet and one had something to do with vets who were also plumbers. No, I really don't understand the dynamic, but if you lost your job as a plumber, one of the places to get hooked up with a new one was the veterans' hall down the street from me. Actually now that I think of it, sometime around 1990 my grandpa made me sign something and show up at some sort of inclusion ceremony. The guy in charge was nice enough to point out that the last dude that signed that book was already dead for some reason. The other veterans' hall they belong to has a nice location on the Long Island Sound and a big backyard. We rented it out to have Christmas dinner one year because my grandmother didn't feel like cleaning her house. OK, maybe all this explains more about me than I'd like everyone to know, but my point is: Eat lard, dumpster diver / I'm-only-getting-fries guy.

Thank your local veteran for supporting the punk scene.

Thank you and good night.

bill@candids.com

"Past performance is no guarantee of future returns," investment firms warn their clients. Be that as it may, no standard disclaimer can shield stockbrokers from accountability for lousy advice. Those who earn a reputation for picking good stocks become wealthy. Those whose counsel consistently costs their customers money get fired. On Wall Street, hard work and a little luck pay off.

It's the same for other professional prognosticators. Doctors who misdiagnose, lawyers who file doomed lawsuits and film

directors who go over budget suffer opprobrium, damaged reputations and—ultimately—diminished incomes. Even our political leaders, who enjoy access to up-to-the-minute assessments by high-tech intelligence agencies and are thus presumed to know what they're doing, are expected to foretell the consequences of their actions. Six months before invading Iraq, defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld assured us that "there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction." "I doubt it will last six months," he predicted when the war began. Rumsfeld, always wrong wrong wrong, got fired.

Political pundits are the exception to the rule that applies to everyone else—the more they're wrong, the more they're paid.

Millions of people turn to America's top syndicated newspaper columnists and broadcast talk show hosts to place the day's events into context and to get a sense of what will happen on the national and international political scene in years to come.

All this inside-the-Beltway chatter is serious business. The prognoses of opinion mongers influence policymakers and investors whose decisions determine whether economies rise or fall; their take on foreign policy can drive Congress to war or pressure a president to make peace. Had Rush Limbaugh opposed the invasion of Iraq in 2003, to cite one example, there's a substantial chance that 600,000 Iraqis and Americans would not be dead today.

Unlike stockbrokers and doctors and lawyers, however, no one holds pundits accountable for their predictions. In opposition to logic and the tenets of capitalism, editorialists who repeatedly get it wrong prosper nevertheless. The biggest morons in print and on the air are hired for increasingly prestigious and lucrative gigs on radio and TV, invited to give $10,000-an-hour talks, and showered with awards and six-figure book deals. Strange but true: repeatedly screwing up is a prerequisite for making the bestsellers list.

During the run-up to the Iraq war, syndicated columnist Ann Coulter repeatedly parroted Bush Administration talking points that will go down in history for their depraved falseness and brazen illogic. "As George Bush pointed out in his State of the Union address," she wrote on January 31, 2003, "dictators are not in the habit of 'politely putting us on notice before they strike.'" By the time a threat is 'imminent,' Chicago will be gone."

Everyone, including Bush, now admits that Saddam never possessed or tried to develop nuclear weapons. Given the information available at the time, however, Coulter ought to have known that Chicago—and the rest of the United States—had never been endangered by Iraq. The reason: Saddam's missiles had a maximum range of a few hundred miles. If she knew that fact, she lied. If she didn't, she should have looked it up. Whether she was dishonest or lazy, neither conclusion speaks well of her skills as a pundit.

During the early days of the invasion, US troops faced fierce resistance—not just from regular Iraqi army troops but by the Shiite civilians we'd expected to greet us as liberators. Clued-in pundits recognized these incidents as the beginnings of an insurgency that would later reduce the US to near financial and moral ruin. Not Coulter. Typing from the comfort of her Manhattan apartment, she ridiculed the accounts filed by reporters embedded with US troops half a world away: *"The [New York] Times* said our troops were 'faced with battlefield death, human error and other tragedies.' The task 'looks increasingly formidable.' There were 'disturbing events,' and American forces were engaged in a 'fierce firefight—an early glimpse of urban warfare.'...We're losing this war! The Elite Republican Guard is assembling outside New York City! Head for the hills!"

But the *Times* was right. Coulter committed the cardinal sin of the paid prophet. Not only was she wrong, she was snotty about it.

On May 27, 2004, Coulter claimed, on Fox News: "We have found weapons of mass destruction. That is something the media is repeatedly lying about. We have not found stockpiles. We found the plants for manufacturing, we found the experiments, we found the room for human experimentation labs. We found lots of weapons of mass destruction." In the same interview, she said "it's pretty darn safe over there [in Iraq]." Obviously, none of this was true.

Coulter has been wrong about just about everything. She defended Bush, his preemptive wars against Afghanistan and Iraq, torture programs, unilateralism, and deficits. All have been proven disastrous; all have been repudiated by most Americans, including Republicans. Yet Coulter continues to cash in. All five of her books, thanks to heavy promotional campaigns by Random House and mass buys by right-wing organizations, have been bestsellers. She continues to be asked about, and paid for, her opinions on Fox News and MSNBC. She's so powerful and influential that liberal authors have published three new books attacking her—none of which stands a chance of matching her sales.

Liberal *Times* opinion columnist Thomas Friedman is more proof that, for pundits, being wrong pays off. When UN illegal arms inspectors went to Iraq in 1997, Friedman shrieked that "Saddam is up to something serious this time."

As subsequent events have proven, Saddam wasn't up to anything. He had destroyed his chemical and biological weapons at the end of the 1991 Gulf War, as the US had demanded. Nevertheless, Friedman went on, "it cannot be just to obliterate those sites where [Saddam] is still hiding weapons—although that's important. The US has to try to destroy him too. Because the worst of all worlds would be if we destroy his weapons but he survives and throws out the UN inspectors. He would then be able to rearm without anyone watching Iraq. And he will try to rearm."

In 2003, a week before the invasion, Friedman was giddy that his war lust was about to be sated: "I deeply identify with the president's vision of ending Saddam Hussein's tyranny and building a more decent, progressive Iraq. If done right, it could be so important to the future of the Arab-Muslim world, which is why I won't give up on this war."

As if Friedman's support for the attack wasn't morally and tactically heinous enough, he posited a ludicrous supposition: that the Bush Administration, which had already botched the occupation of Afghanistan, could have "done" Iraq "right." Friedman continued to pimp the war in column after column, pausing occasionally to bemoan what he described as the faulty execution of a noble idea.

Now it's obvious that the war itself, rather than the plan for a subsequent occupation, was intrinsically flawed. But it was Friedman's job to see and convey that before the tragic waste of thousands of lives and billions of dollars—carnage that his work helped promote and prolong.

Despite his dismal performance, Friedman's star still rises. His job at the *Times* secure, he recently collected an Overseas Press Award and was named to the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II. His latest book, the turgid pro-free trade screed *The World Is Flat,* has been on the New York Times Bestsellers List for nearly two years. Among its many laughable errors is its central premise that Christopher Columbus set out for the New

World in order to disprove the idea that the world is flat. It has sold over two million copies; assuming a standard royalty rate of eight percent and thirty-dollar cover price, he has received at least $4 million for this title alone.

Christopher Hitchens, the socialist-turned-neoconservative who famously gloated that Afghanistan was "the first country in history to be bombed out of the Stone Age," continues to collect four bucks a word from *Vanity Fair* despite widespread consensus that the United States hasn't rebuilt anything since its Fall 2001 bombing campaign. Given that virtually everything Hitch writes gets debunked a few months later, it's reasonable to assume that editor Graydon Carter doesn't worry about credibility when picking his roster of well-remunerated writers.

Some pundits' predictions prove prescient. On March 13, 2003, MIT linguist and political critic Noam Chomsky warned against invading Iraq. "The consequences," he wrote in the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, "could be catastrophic in Iraq and around the world. The United States may reap a whirlwind of terrorist retaliation—and step up the possibility of nuclear Armageddon." Terrorist attacks against Americans have become an hourly occurrence in Iraq; North Korea's dangerous nuclear brinkmanship resulted from Kim Jung Il's fears that he would be targeted for "regime change." Conceding that "Saddam remains a terrible threat to those within his reach," Chomsky continued by correctly assessing where Coulter and Friedman failed: "Today, his reach does not extend beyond his own domains."

Chomsky's finest post-9/11 moment took place just one day later. "In short," Chomsky wrote in an online essay, "the [9/11] crime is a gift to the hard jingoist right, those who hope to use force to control their domains. That is even putting aside the likely US actions, and what they will trigger—possibly more attacks like this one, or worse. The prospects ahead are even more ominous than they appeared to be before the latest atrocities. As to how to react, we have a choice. We can express justified horror; we can seek to understand what may have led to the crimes, which means making an effort to enter the minds of the likely perpetrators...We may try to understand, or refuse to do so, contributing to the likelihood that much Worse lies ahead."

Chomsky's analyses are consistently literate, humane, and, more often than not, dead on target. So where does his latest book, *Failed States*, appear on the bestsellers list? It doesn't. Seven months after publication, it's the 1856th bestselling title on Amazon.

Maybe he should look for a job on Wall Street.

New Book! *Silk Road to Ruin: Is Central Asia the New Middle East?* is out now (NBM Publishing, 304 pages, $22.95). You can get the book at any bookstore or comics shop, or on the Internet, or order a signed copy by mailing thirty dollars to the above address (include your mailing address and how you'd like it signed).

Silk Road to Ruin is a comprehensive primer to the political powder keg of Central Asia—Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Xinjiang in Western China—that will soon make the current war in Iraq look like Dick Cheney's proverbial "cakewalk." It includes a hundred pages of graphic novella accounts of my trips to the 'Stans, photos and maps of the region, and in-depth essays explaining everything from oil pipeline politics to buzkashi, the craziest and most dangerous sport currently played by the human race.

"Where are you playing again tonight?" I ask my pal, Paul Ryder, as I watch him blow to hell this badass alien dude in this new game I got for the Xbox 360 called "F.E.A.R."

"Someplace on the Island," he says, not taking his eyes off the screen as he sneaks up behind some cyborg-looking fuck and clocks him in the back of the head with his shotgun.

"Awesome," I tell the kid.

"What? That we're playing on the Island?" he asks.

I feel like screaming that it was awesome he clocked that borg motherfucker, and that I've hated those type of people since I first saw their ugly asses on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, because, well, they look like de-penised skinheads.

"Yeah," I say, "that you're playing on the Island. Where exactly are you playing?"

"I dunno," says Paul, in typical Paul Ryder fashion. I swear, if that kid's head was screwed on straight, he'd be like me.

"Suffolk, Roslyn, Amityville, Hoboken?" I ask.

"Amityville," says Paul as a smile broadens across his face. Like he remembered something *very* important.

"What club?" I ask him as he switches from the shotgun to a rapid firing machine gun that makes "thumping" sounds when its bullets pierce the torsos of the bald motherfuckers.

"I dunno," says Paul.

Well, I played there with Furious George not so long ago, I tell the kid with the rock-star haircut and talent to match.

"Oh yeah?" he asks, actually interested.

* * *

"Yeah, all right, hit me!" screamed Mikie from the back seat of Evan's dad's car.

We all just rolled our eyes and tried to ignore him. Mikie hadn't shut up since he got in the car.

"What town are we playing again?" asked Matt, who, along with Mikie, was the other member of Dick Army. The band that was joining Furious George on the bill that day.

"Calamityville," mumbled Evan, from behind his Ray-Bans, wearing his Judas Priest shirt.

"Yeah, all right, hit me!" screamed Mikie, "That town rocks! That's where they made that movie!"

Michael, our drummer, turned up the car stereo. I looked over at Matt, and he just shrugged his shoulders. I first met Mikie at my cousin's apartment party, where he had the words "The Champ" painted on his chest. I was convinced he was the taxi-driver guy from MTV, but found out he wasn't. I found him amusing that night. But not today. It was too hot.

"Are we there yet?" screamed Mikie as we inched our way along the LIE, just into Forest Hills. I just looked at him. With his straight dyed black hair, Italian designer glasses, cut-off T-shirt which had the Heaven's Gate logo on the front, and "My parents followed the Hale-Bopp Comet, and all I got was this lousy T-shirt" on the back, and his short shorts. I could see his hairy stomach and the beginning of his pubic mound.

"Is he like this all the time?" asked Michael, turning the stereo down a bit.

"Hey," screamed Mikie, "You're turning down L'il Kim! Lick my pussy, come on, yeah, all right, hit me!" We all laughed a bit. Then Mikie did too. He sounded like a horse with terrible asthma. Punk Rock.

* * *

We eventually found the club, Crawdaddys, and parked behind it. As we walked into the empty heavy metal bar, Rob Noxious, from Dick Army approached me.

"They upped the cover," he told me.

"Really?" I asked.

"Really," he said.

I approached what appeared to be the doorman/bouncer, and asked him what was going on. He bore a striking resemblance to Gene Simmons. Without the make-up.

"We had to up the door price," explained Gene Simmons, with his black-biker boots and metal shin-guards, "We heard you wanted to get paid."

"Um," I stuttered, "errr, that would be nice."

"Yeah," explained Gene Simmons, "Most bands that play here don't expect to get paid. But I hear you guys are somebody or something." He sounded exactly like Andrew Dice Clay.

"Whatever," I said, and then introduced myself.

It turns out the guy's name was Jake, and he had been called in at the last moment to work the show. He says the club didn't know about the show until the night before, and the kid who was running it hadn't really been in touch at all. Wonderful.

* * *

The first band, The Striped Bastards, took the stage, and began their set. They played good punky-thrash, and all eight audience members liked them. Well, six of them, anyway. Two of the audience members, teenage girls, were busy talking with the bartender. And making goo-goo eyes at him.

* * *

Next up was Dick Army. Mikie set up the drums while Matt helped me set up my amp. I tried tuning Matt's guitar for him, but gave up halfway through because each string was wound on in a different direction. When I asked him why the guitar was strung that way, he told me it wasn't his, it was some chick's.

Dick Army did their usual set, playing all the hits. They rocked like crazy in front of the ten audience members, two of whom were now kind of holding hands with the bartender. Mikie kept yelling "Hit me, all right, yeah!" from the stage. We all laughed.

* * *

Next up were The Suave Swine. Paul, the drummer from the band, had booked the show. Sometime during The Striped Bastard's set, he told me he was sorry no one was there, and that he had given out at least 200 fliers at shows. I told him it must have been the heat.

The Suave Swine took the stage, and the lead singer came out wearing Misfits make up. They played an amusing set of punk, and I kind of liked them. For about twenty minutes. After about a half hour, I found myself outside talking to Gene Simmons with Evan.

"I've seen all the Priest shows since '88," said Gene, pointing to Evan's T-shirt.

Evan just nodded his head.

"I've seen lots of metal. I love metal," he explained.

It was kind of obvious. He wore all black. Had huge muscles, wore spikes, black gloves, and the whole nine yards.

"You like Slayer?" I asked him. I love Slayer.

"Fuckin' Slayer rocks!" was his answer, "I saw them tear up the fuckin' Garden, that was one fuck of a show!"

I tell him that I too was at the "Monsters of Rock" show, where Slayer drove the kids to tear out seat pads, and throw M-80's at one another.

"That show was funny, wanna know why?" Gene Simmons asked Evan and me.

We asked him why. He explained to us that his friend, who took him to see the Dead, joined him at the Slayer show.

"It was fuckin' great," explained Gene Simmons, "He was a little jewboy, and they threw him over the rails! He didn't know what to expect, and he got that!"

Evan and I, looking at each other's Jewish noses, laughed politely.

"Hey," I asked Gene Simmons, wanting to change the subject as quickly as possible, "Ya know where the Amityville Horror House is?"

"Funny you should ask that," said Gene Simmons, "cause I'm gonna tell you. I'm not supposed to tell anyone, it's the big town secret, but I'll tell you, because you seem so cool."

I thank the guy for the compliment.

"It's up the street, at the next light. That's Ocean Avenue. Make a right, and it's about three blocks up. If ya can't find it, just stop in at the Pizza joint up near there and tell them to tell ya where it is. Tell the Pizza guys Jake sent ya."

I tell him I will, and thank him again. Then Evan and I go inside and wait for Suave Swine to finish. Three minutes later Gene Simmons walks inside and hands me a Quarter Pounder from a bag full of McDonalds food. I give it back to him, but thank him anyway.

"See?" he says, "Who's taking care of ya? I am!"

I begin to really like the guy.

Finally Paul's band finishes playing and it's our turn. There are now eight audience members in attendance. The bartender, and the two teenage girls seem to be missing in action.

*

We set up our stuff, and then, in a brilliant move I stole from seeing PiL at The Ritz a zillion years ago, I set up our banner in *front* of the band. We then play our set. From behind it. No one can see us. And we can't see anyone. Every once in a while a camera attached to some hands slips under the banner by our feet, and a flash goes off.

We do our whole set looking at yellow fabric. And we do it well. Since we can't see that we are playing to eight people, we play with real enthusiasm. It's when we remove the banner after the set and find out there are only four people left, that we get a little bummed. But Gene Simmons tells us we rule, and we are welcome back anytime. He tells us we were real good metal. I guess it was the Satan voice I was singing with.

Out in the parking lot behind the club we are handed ten dollars from Paul. He tells us that is all the money the bands made all together, and that we can have it. We thank him. Sincerely.

As we load Evan's dad's car with what little equipment we have, Mikie starts in.

"Yeah, all right, hit me!" he screams, "Ya know George, they threw me out of the club because they said I was too wild! Hit me! Woo! But they really like me!"

I tell Mikie that they really like him.

He tells me he knows they do. Then he sees Erica, Dave our roadie's sister. She is sixteen, very cute, and we are all very over-protective of her.

"Hey mama," says Mikie, "Hit me! Woo! Haven't I seen you along the West Side Highway?"

"Shut-up," says Erica, in that sixteen-year old way, accenting the "up."

"Woo, hit me," yells Mikie, "You have cute legs, baby," he says to her. Erica is wearing a short punk rock leopard print skirt.

"Ewwww," says Erica, then hides behind me for protection against Mikie.

"Hit me, mama!" wails Mikie, "I know you, don't I? I know you from the West Side Highway. I know you from the back of your head! Hit me! Woo! All right!"

"Ewwww," screams Erica, "Leave me alone, you creep!"

"Shut-up Mikie," says Dave, our roadie, "You are disgusting.

Suddenly we all start to yell at Mikie, and he starts yelling back.

"Why doesn't anyone like me?" he yells.

"Pull up your pants," says Erica, who, like everyone else, can see Mikie's stomach hair and pubic mound.

"You want some, pretty momma, huh?" screams Mikie, "Hit me, yeah!"

At that point the conversation turns to leaving Mikie in Amityville, and suddenly he quiets down very quickly.

* * *

Eventually we leave the club, and say our good-byes to everyone. We leave Dave and Erica sitting on a bench along the road waiting for their dad to pick them up.

We travel up to the nearest light and make a right. Then we go about three blocks up, and we see it. Or what we think is it. The Amityville Horror House.

"That house looks like the house in the movie," screams Mikie from the back seat, "Hit me, woo, yeah!"

We tell Mikie we think it is the house, but are not sure.

"That's it I tell you," screams Mikie, "That's where they filmed that damn movie!"

We start to explain to Mikie that the movie is based on a real story when suddenly we hear a voice saying "Get out! Get out!"

Evan and I look at each other. Scared shitless.

Then we hear the voices say, "Go home. Leave us alone!"

We look outside the car to the left, and see a bunch of old ladies yelling at us to leave their neighborhood. They probably see our Jersey plates and know we are sight seeing.

"Well hit me, all right! Yeah!" screams Mikie at them. And then we drive away.

On our trip back to Manhattan, we almost lose Mikie twice. Once at a McDonalds, and once on the LIE. But we have no such luck.

The next night Dick Army plays at Continental and I go see them. Mikie yells, "Hey George, all right, yeah, hit me!" and I smile. For some reason, during the past twenty-four hours, I think I missed him. Hit me. Yeah. Well all right!

Take My Life, Please.

Endnotes:

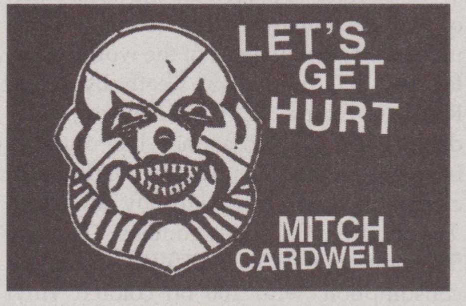
1. Got some bitchin' CDs this month...and they totally rule. First up is The Bullys *BQE Overdrive*. If you haven't heard of New York City's Finest, The Bullys, you should. They rock harder an earthquake and get girls wetter than a Tsunami. Great tunes on this, their third release, include "Pop (is for Fags)" written by the late great John Hefferman, "'78 Nova," and "Skel." Oh, did I mention "Slammer" and "Balls"? I thought so.

Also got the finished version of Brooklyn's favorites, Black Death. Their new CD is called *Beer Vampire*, and guess what? It doesn't suck. Vlad, along with his pals, pump out some pure punk rock with tunes like "Live Free or Die," "Dead Hooker," and "I Like Pussy." My kinda band. Punk Fuckin' Rock!

Also got a compilation called *No Two Flakes The Same* on Penny For The Guy Records. Great stuff here with the total Christmas theme, and bands like Starside Eight, Andy Mattins, and Shit-Rob K Hut. It also has Box Of Crayons on it, whose CD, *Superpopcorn* is out and a-rockin!

2. Got Slayer's new one, *Christ Illusion*. Fuckin' Slayer!

3. www.georgetabb.com



We begin with the past this month. When it comes to reissue compilations of the obscure variety, I can't think of a more worthy series to dive into right now than *Messthetics*. Chances are that if you even marginally consider yourself a punkish record nerd, your interest in UK DIY, has been building slowly over the past couple of years. Fuck, even the liberty-spiked drunk punx here at *MRR* ran a DESPERATE BICYCLES feature recently. The craze is official! Like many, my interest in the genre grew from reading Johan Kugelberg's list of his top 100 DIY records in an issue of *Ugly Things* a couple years back. Kugelberg's history of sending collectors into a tizzy is well documented, but that's exactly the effect this list had on me. It really opened me up to investigating a whole slew of great records that I never would've heard of otherwise. In coincidental conjunction with this often-cited list was Chuck Warner's Hyped2Death website and CD-R label, an outfit dedicated to compiling and releasing rare punk, power-pop and DIY records on affordable CD-R compilations. Although the punk (*Hyped2Death*), power-pop (*Teenline*), and US DIY (*Homework*) compilation series' are all fantastic, *Messthetics*, his UK DIY series, is the by far the most exciting, both in terms of the music presented and in the dedication and passion with which they are compiled. Warner's definition of the genre ought to tell you everything you need to know: UK DIY is music "united by wit, enthusiasm, musical risk-taking...and a conspicuous lack of pose." Though bearing many resemblances to punk sonically and ideally, DIY's only rule is that there simply aren't any rules. One look at www.hyped2death.com ought to give you fair indication of just how wide the DIY firestorm spread in the UK during the late '70s and early '80s. Hundreds of bands formed and began releasing records on their own, as cheaply as possible, regardless of whatever levels of ability or professionalism were dictated by the commonly accepted "industry standards," punk or otherwise. At its best, DIY is as personal and honest as underground rock 'n' roll gets...and the material collected on these comps supports that claim.

Originally planned as a series of CD-Rs, *Messthetics* soon grew into a full-scale reissue series, offering up great CD reissues of many of the genre's most exciting bands—the most notable of which is *Astral Glamour*, the 3xCD box of HOMOSEXUALS material that I spilled quite a bit of ink over in this column (and anywhere else I could) not so long ago. Based on the strength of these full-scale reissues, Warner has decided to make *Messthetics* "official" by re-releasing and beefing up the series in the form of real-CD reissues. The first three volumes in the series were recently released, beginning with introductory *Messthetics Greatest Hits: The Sound Of DIY 1977-80*. If you are looking to get hooked, this is the place to start. I would equate my exposure to hearing bands like SCROTUM POLES and THE TRONICS for the first time here to the feeling I had when I first heard some of the early *Killed By Death* compilations: immediately impressive and worthy of fixation. The series continues with the first two regional volumes (*Messthetics #101* and *#102*), documenting DIY from London between 1977-81. All three volumes are presented with extensive track-by-track liners, previously unpublished photos, sleeve shots, and everything else that has come to be expected from Warner. Fans won over by *Astral Glamour* should take note of these compilations as well, since they include the only existing material from the pre-Homosexuals outfit,

THE REJECTS! Preliminary plans point to *Messthetics* covering the region in 12 volumes (!), with installments on Wales, Manchester, Scotland and other areas in the planning stages. Based on the strength of these first three installments, I seriously doubt that I'll be able to avoid any of the future compilations, assuming the quality level remains consistent. Do yourself a favor and check one of these collections out. It'll likely ignite a fire under your music-loving ass.

Let's flash forward. I haven't really dished an exercise in blues-fused punk scuzz in a while—not that there's been a shortage of it in 2006. This sorta shit has been beaten to death by countless Euro bands lately, many of which shrug off the required good tunes and pummel-layers of noize, reprioritizing the thought processes around guest appearances, momentary impact and market saturation. But, as fate would have it, a package has come along that trumps all the other contenders in its weight class: *Alberhill*, the debut release (a 2xLP!?!?!) by JUNKPILE JIMMY, released in a scant pressing of 253 by Cartel Ilustre. Although Junkpile Jimmy is just one man, he's got a ton of different faces. Although primarily influenced by the dirtiest blues-punk of the early '90s (JOHNNY HASH, DOO RAG and OBLIVIANS are all admitted inspirations of JJ), *Alberhill* never stands still. I went in expecting one-man-band bashing, but came out with a 2xLP that moves in between traditional and dirty blues with ease, splicing it all with a serious affinity for fuzz, machinery and just flat-out noise. This is a release with meat, folks...the kind you can chew on for months. FANTASTIC! Although the initial pressing vanished quickly, I'm sure your favorite distro will have copies as this issue hits stands. If not, a repress is certain. Visit www.cartel-ilustre.com for updates on Junkpile Jimmy and *Alberhill*.

Although it took me a couple of months to catch up to it, *Fait Accompli*, the debut LP from HUE BLANC'S JOYLESS ONES, is certainly worth the wait. Released on the variation-obsessed P.Trash label, *Fait Accompli* takes what was hinted at on their impressive Trickknee Productions single from 2005 and runs with it further than I expected. One might expect a band connected with STRONG COME ONS and BLUE BALLS to stay on the stripped'n'primitive side of the tracks, but HBJO loaded up on smarts, heart, booze and drugs, throwing all of it into the mix on this great album. If bands like HANK IV and THE CUTS get you going, you simply can't lose with this one.

One of the coolest records I've run across since last column—the debut from a Memphis band called KAZALOK. Italy's Shake Your Ass Records released the *Chandrasekhar Limit* 12"EP in October, but I'm just catching wind of it now. Better late than never though, as this is probably the best legitimate psych-punk release I've heard in quite some time. I know a lot of folks out there cringe at the mere mention of anything remotely resembling psych creeping its way into *MRR*, which is fine, but this Kazalok record is definitely deserving of a mention or two. One listen to "C.I.A." ought to dispel any doubt in your mind. *Chandrasekhar Limit* does, in fact, feature the freak-outs the true-blue punker among us might find cringe-worthy, but I must say that I enjoy it front to back. If you are at all interested in THE MIRRORS or BLACK LIPS, I could see you losing your shit over this EP. Pretty fucking good, if you ask me...

VEGETATIVE STATE are the latest batch of Ohio teenage lame-brains to be unleashed upon the rest of the world, courtesy of THE FEELERS' Death By Noise Records! Fitting, isn't it? Anyway, their debut 7"EP, *Cracker*, sounds like outtakes from the *Suburbia* soundtrack: dark, semi-creepy hardcore inspired by any number of '80s Southern California combos. There are 500 copies of the *Cracker* 7"EP available for consumption, with 100 on colored vinyl and two sleeve variations. Nerd alert!!! Visit www.myspace.com/deathbynoise for more info.

Heads Up Records is the name of the new label formed by Johnny of FE FI FO FUMS and Betsy from BLANK ITS! Their first release is a 45 by an all-girl Austrian band called THE SHIRLEY MACLAINES. "Hey Girls" b/w "Television Sucks" sounds like the perfect mix of no-fi trashy garage and early '90s female-fronted screech. File under: Rambunctious! Score copies at www.headsup-records.com.

French punk fever continues at my house (damn you, *Tete De Bebe*!) with a couple of studio one-man projects worthy of your attention. First is THE FEELING OF LOVE, a project that collides bluesy garage punk with drum machines. *The Right Bitch At The Right Place* 7"EP, released by Yakisakana, sounds right at home alongside many of the other new French bands we've come across in 2006...meaning it's "different" by default. On the noisy garage side of the fence, we have LES HULKS, a project concerned with making the most notable of the recent French noise-mongers sound tame. Yes, Unrecording Records' *Baby Pussy* 7"EP manages to one-up the Nasty Product lot in the blown-out department by a considerable margin, offering a shimmer of hope to the mourning fans of the just-split FATALS. Singles such as this often meet with the repetitive "buy, spin, and file away forever" syndrome, but Les Hulks have managed to keep their single near my turntable for a couple of weeks now, which is a feat many of their peers don't often reach. If you're a fan of this sort of sound, this is your best bet...this month.

HEAD is fucking back!!! It's been several years since we've seen a release out of these Pacific Northwest mongoloids, but the *No Hugging No Learning* LP proves they haven't lost a step. It's been so long since I pulled out *The Monkeys* or *Street Level Assault* and I had sorta written the band off into Never-Never Land, but this new album knocked me on my ass with one listen. Absolutely hilarious lyrics over the most spot-on RAMONES imitation one could ever dream of hearing. Rumors of their older releases being repressed are circulating, but *No Hugging No Learning* is here now and you should go for it. Like always, this is LP-only with a huge fucking poster!!!

Douche Master Records is back again with two new singles that ought to send shivers down the spine of every power-pop fan around. Hot on the heels of their fantastic Shattered debut, THE BLACK AND WHITES are back with the *You're The Only Girl* 7"EP. If you had the chance to score the full length CD-R Goner was peddling early this year, you already know how killer this single is, but Douche Master did the dirty work and pressed 'em up proper, which we're all the better for. Next up is one of my most eagerly anticipated releases of the year— the debut 7"EP by GENTLEMAN JESSE AND HIS MEN, a CARBONAS-related band that is one of the few combos around that's truly deserving of being called power-pop. I had been hoping a band would come along doing the power-pop thing the way I wanted to hear it, and Gentleman Jesse is that band. The band borrows the best elements of UK and US power-pop, stripping away the fashionable glam tricks and looks so many of their peers rely on, choosing instead to focus on fantastic songs and perfect production. I was pretty much floored when I got a preview of these tunes a couple months back and this single has only made my opinion stronger. The *I Don't Wanna Know* 7"EP just crept into my year-end best list and it's very, very close to the top position. Highest

possible recommendation!
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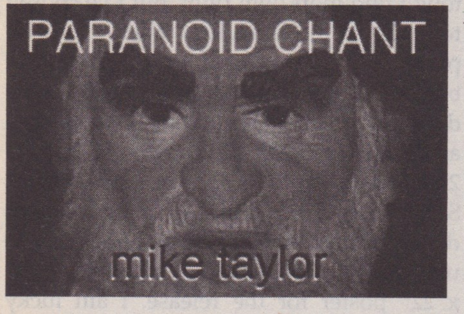

#123. Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream for America. What was his dream?

In early 2007, Director of US Citizen and Immigration Services Emilio Gonzalez will pilot a 144-question naturalization exam. Its focus tends toward the abstractions of what exactly constitutes citizenship and democracy, though many of the questions still address the nuts and bolts of date-and-name US history.

#66. What is the current minimum wage?

Some of the question aim to acclimatize the applicant to contemporary American life. While the questions aren't casual enough to ask for favorite locations on the FM dial or preferred fast food options, there's an uncomfortable surrealism to advising a roomful of Americans-to-be what exactly is the last day in which you can mail your income taxes.

#92. What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?

How would you market a relatively young country that has risen to premature global prominence while reinventing the very idea of wealth to fit its consumption level? Do you come right out and wave the sincerity flag? "Now I know we've made some mistakes in the past, and who hasn't? But I'm here to tell you all about what you'll find in America's 21st century!"

#102. Name one of the major Indian tribes in the United States (adjudicators will be supplied with a complete list).

In a parallel world, there may be a test which one may take to repudiate his or her very participation in the concept of citizenship. It's no doubt an alchemical gift with numbing side effects, but do we ever get to examine what citizenship does to the individual? Well, no; we aren't afforded the perspective. Citizenship may be the first definition thrust upon the newborn. The happenstance of latitude and longitude bestows upon man an acceptance or non-recognition of "inalienable rights."

#71. What is self-government?

And does it matter? In recently deceased George Trow's *Context of No Context*, we're excused from these concerns. Certainly, it's bothersome to wring one's hands over the minutiae of the Democratic Organism. We have romantic and consumerist choices and we get to vote. The subtext is, asking for more—or simply asking for *different*—is absurd. This I find disturbing.

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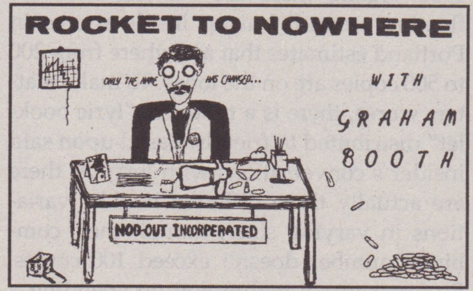
Punx roolz



Ahhh.....Inserts! Just when you thought you'd seen everything, there's always an unseen insert lurking around the next corner. As a distinguished OCD man once wrote, "It Never Ends!" Was he ever right.

Sure, the insert may be one of the more innocuous elements of record collecting (Read: *Yawn!*). But for those like me, whose wantlists have been reduced to a list of $500+ "investments," that elusive insert can provide some needed cheap thrills during the months spent waiting for the next biggie to come out of the woodwork.

The best ones are the ones you stumble onto accidentally. Tonight was a perfect example. I was at my local thrift shop: one that I've found great records at in the past, though usually not in the punk vein. My initial once-over revealed a lot of easy listening and classical crap that I'd seen on a recent visit, so my interest was waning fast. Luckily, in the front of one stack, I spotted the *Rat Music for Rat People* LP compilation on GO! Records from 1982 peeking out.

I guess you know it already, but it's a great compilation of live tracks from some of the best names of early hardcore punk...BAD BRAINS, AVENGERS, BLACK FLAG, CIRCLE JERKS, DILS...you get the idea. The comp itself isn't particularly rare, even with two different cover variations floating around. This copy wasn't in the best shape, apparently well loved by its previous owner. But as I lifted the record out of the bins, I noticed it felt extra thick. Sure enough, there was a folded up poster tucked inside.

There it was, black and white, roughly 18" x 24", with "RAT MUSIC FOR RAT PEOPLE" in the upper right corner. The title was surrounded by a field of live band photos. I immediately recognized SOTHIRA's mug from CRUCIFIX, then PENELOPE HOUSTON and JELLO BIAFRA and others, plus an extra large BAD BRAINS photo with HR diving into the crowd. I've never seen it before, though one California punk expert says that, while they don't pop up too often, they're out there. Better start looking.

Aside from just looking cool, the presence of an insert often signals a first or early pressing. Labels like Frontier or Slash have pressed literally thousands and thousands of copies of certain standards like the ADOLESCENTS LP or FEAR *The Record* LP. With 20-30,000 copies or more floating around of any given title, the presence of an insert can often shrink the field to 5000, 2000 or even 1000 copies, creating a truly rare record. Of course, insert quantities for any given release are not generally kept track of, so collectors have to rely on years of experience and knowledge to gauge the approximate rarity of a particular insert. It always pays to check even the most common records for inserts!

This month I'm going to focus on some of the more elusive inserts I know of which continue to evade collectors the world over. Who knows, maybe it will get some of you who've all but given up buying records to get back out there and start looking. For now, I'm going to stick with LPs, since there is still a pretty good chance of running across some of them for a relative bargain. Many of these took me several years to come across, and still others I don't even own yet, so there you go. Without further ado, and in increasing rarity order, here are eight rare punk LP inserts you need to keep an eye out for:

1. HÜSKER DÜ *Land Speed Record* LP (New Alliance NAR-007) 1981. This was the first insert to really get under my skin. We all know SST reissued this album in the late '80s, and it is certainly one of the most common hardcore records out there. And of course, it is "hardcore" in a very real sense, being one of the fastest and earliest examples of it. The original New Alliance pressing is still relatively easy to find, I would guess every one in three or four copies to show up is on the original label.

The insert is another story. I'd seen an insert listed on a sale list in the early '90s, but no one I knew had ever seen it. It became my first crusade, and I would literally grab every copy of the record I saw just to have a look inside. It took about two years, and I probably saw twelve copies of the New Alliance version before I ever came across that insert. I'm not sure what a standard press run for New Alliance was back then, but I would guess there are 1000, maybe 2000 copies of this particular insert floating around.

2. DESCENDENTS *Milo Goes to College* LP (New Alliance NAR-012) 1982. I started with New Alliance, so I may as well continue that thread with the first DESCENDENTS album. What a classic! New Alliance and SST had a similar reissue arrangement with the DESCENDENTS in the late '80s, and I have even seen several copies of the album mixing SST covers and New Alliance labels. But the collector in me needed a bonafide first pressing, and as is usually the case, I had to follow the insert. I was shocked to see a few copies with insert sell for over $100 on eBay, but with a bit of persistence, I splurged on a super-clean copy for $30 at a local store about a year ago. I would make a similar estimation of 1000 to 2000 inserts out there. Good luck!

3. CORROSION OF CONFORMITY *Eye for an Eye* LP (No Core) 1984. There are so many different pressings and cover variations for this particular album, it's hard to keep track, let alone worry about whether your copy has an insert or not. This record drove me to get methodical about inserts, pressing variations, and trying to authenticate claims sorting them out. With help from friends and other collectors, I feel that I finally have a grasp of them all. You'll probably recognize the ubiquitous red on white "Spiky Skull" cover design on the Toxic Shock release. This is the last, and most common cover variation for this release (not counting the black on brown paper bootleg now making the rounds). According to my sources, the very first version of the record is actually that same "Spiky Skull" cover design, only in black on white, with no reference to Toxic Shock anywhere. To complicate things further, there was another intermediate "Ghoul" cover design, which came in several color variations, most of which added the "Distributed by Toxic Shock" note on the back. Of course, the insert(s) were what had me sweating, and the very first pressing, apparently 1000 copies, included *both* a lyric insert *and* a small COC sticker. Thus far I have been able to get an insert, but no sticker...so the search continues...

4. POISON IDEA *Kings of Punk* LP (Pusmort) 1986. We all know Pushead is all about pressing variations and ultra limited releases. Thankfully, back in the mid-'80s, most of Pus's limited editions hadn't gotten to "hyper" rare levels, so there's still hope of getting some of them in your lifetime. Groove for groove, it's hard to top the "Portland Edition" POISON IDEA LP with Pusmort rarities. I unknowingly scored a copy at a Chicago record store in the mid-'90s for $10, and was puzzled by the plethora of inserts layed out in front of me at home. Two different very huge posters, two Pusmort inserts, *and* a sticker, all housed in one record sleeve next to arguably the best US hardcore record from 1986. Again, there are varying numbers floating around, but an inside source in Portland estimates that anywhere from 200 to 500 copies are on the loose. To make matters worse, there is a mythical "lyric booklet" distributed to friends. Based upon said insider's conversations with Jerry A, there are actually three different booklet variations in varying sizes, though their combined number doesn't exceed 100 copies. Be forewarned: before you go spending a fortune on one, make sure you don't pay through the nose for a Xerox copy, since even the experts have a hard time definitively identifying an original lyric booklet.

5. SAMHAIN *Initium* LP (Plan 9 PL9/04) 1984. Recently, I confessed my love for a particular breed of '80s goth punk records: those which employ electronic bells. SAMHAIN was the first one I heard, but others like CHRISTIAN DEATH *Only Theatre of Pain* LP on Frontier from 1982 and 45 GRAVE *Sleep in Safety* LP on Enigma from 1982 sealed the deal. As it turns out, these records have more in common than bells. All of them have rare inserts. The CHRISTIAN DEATH LP insert is relatively easy to find, but with 20,000+ LPs out there, only the early copies had them. 45 GRAVE doesn't seem to carry the same wide appeal of their goth punk counterparts, but just a few early copies of their album came with an elusive fan club insert. But the SAMHAIN *Initium* lyric insert is in a league of its own. Xeroxes have been floating around for years, but in 10+ years of searching, I have only seen an original turn up a small handful of times (4?). Surely more have slipped under the radar unnoticed, tucked inside sleeves. But when I check the conflicted data posted on Misfitscentral.com (500 or 5000), I have to go with the lower quantity of 500. This is a rare one indeed.

6. MISFITS *Walk Among Us* LP (Ruby/Slash JRR804) 1982. Most of you know this release came with both a printed inner photo sleeve and a Misfits merchandise order form, the latter of which is a tough find in its own right. But I've chosen to focus on the legendary *Walk Among Us* poster. This inclusion is skirting the lines between "promotional" inserts and "standard" inserts, but due to the relatively high amount of promos distributed (at least 1-200), I'm going to lump it in with the rest. Some early first pressing copies, with its distinctive "Pink Sky" cover, were distributed as Promotional copies including a 22" x 22" poster for the release. I am lucky enough to own two copies, if only because they are both slightly different: one copy has a large chunk of the right corner cut off, and aside from the poster inside, also includes a stapled press kit on colored Slash letterhead; the second copy has no cuts on the cover and only has the poster. I almost passed up the second copy for $50 a couple of years ago. Thankfully for me, I had the foresight to look inside the cover wherein I gleaned the untouched poster. Yikes!

7. TERVEET KÄDET *Halloween* LP (Propaganda) 1983. OK, I'll be honest, I can't confirm just *how* rare this insert is. That seems to be the case with all of the early Finnish Propaganda label releases. Some had booklets, some had inserts, some had both, and still others had nothing. Then they threw colored vinyl variations into the mix! I think most of us stateside are thoroughly confused by all of this. Maybe it takes some Finnish beer goggles to make sense of it all? Suffice it to say, if you own any Propaganda releases with inserts, they are at least relatively rare, if not "hyper rare," or even "giga rare." I selected this particular release since it actually clears up (huh?) some confusion. For years, I haven't known what to call the Finnish pressing of TERVEET KÄDET killer first LP. Is it *Self-Titled* or *Propaganda* or what? Many of you know the German Rock-O-Rama release with *Halloween* scrawled across the cover...is it a different album or what? Well, if y'all had this rare as hen's teeth 4" x 12.5" printed semi-glossy paper insert (I don't!), you would know the first Finnish album is also called *Halloween*!

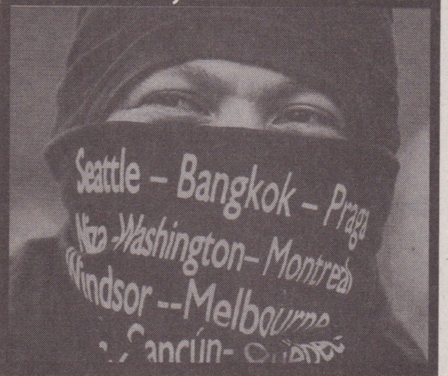
8. BLACK FLAG *Damaged* LP (SST/Unicorn SST 007) 1981. I'm gonna top off this list with a recent discovery. I purchased an early SST/Unicorn version of *Damaged* with the infamous "Anti-Parent" sticker on the back. What piqued my curi-

ousity was its associated materials: an SST order form, a 10 page stapled packet of early BLACK FLAG Pettibon fliers, and to top it off, a "Damaged" lyric sheet. Whaa? I've never heard of that? It was a painful week waiting for it to arrive, but sure enough, it was a double-sided offset-print lyric sheet with the BLACK FLAG logo and Modern Bars on one side, and DAMAGED at the top on the back. None of the experts I've talked to have ever seen it before. In terms of graphics, it's nothing special, but, uh, like it really matters?

Maybe someday there will be a comprehensive list of inserts, but at best, the information will remain largely based upon foggy memories and hearsay. After all, most labels weren't methodically writing this stuff down back in 1983. All I can say for now is *always check for inserts!*

Thanks to Abe King for help! See you in the bins...

Go Team, Smash State!



"Lefty" Hooligan • What's Left?

It's one of the most famous television commercials in history. Called the "Daisy Girl" ad, it opens with a little girl in a sun-drenched field, picking the petals off a daisy. As she counts the petals, the voice over segues into a launch countdown. The girl fades into a nuclear explosion, and the ad ends with a pitch to vote for Lyndon Baines Johnson.

The Daisy Girl ad was instrumental in defeating Barry Goldwater in the 1964 presidential elections. Johnson portrayed Goldwater as a dangerous extremist, and used Goldwater's support for the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Vietnam to put the fear of global nuclear holocaust into the American electorate. Johnson won a landslide victory, and Goldwater's faction of the Republican Party was thoroughly crushed.

Goldwater's was the conservative wing of the GOP. Conservative on all counts. His was the original small government, free market, anti-communist, isolationist conservatism we associate today with paleo-conservatives like Patrick Buchanan. Goldwater sought to roll back both the New Deal and federal involvement in the civil rights movement which ended legal segregation, guaranteed blacks the right to vote, and attempted to halt racial discrimination in housing, education, and employment. Goldwater's free market economics was trumped by a patriotic nationalism that sought to protect American industry from unfair foreign competition, much as his isolationist, anti-interventionist foreign policy was trumped by a virulent anticommunism that sought to forcibly role back the Soviet bloc, with nuclear weapons if necessary.

In the 1964 primaries, Goldwater's Republican faction trounced the GOP's other major faction, the liberal wing led by Nelson Rockefeller. Rockefeller's Republicans basically accepted the New Deal, government economic intervention, the welfare state, and federal support for civil rights, though perhaps not as fervently as the New Deal liberal wing of the Democratic Party led by Johnson. The Democratic Party also had a second main wing, a conservative faction, a gaggle of pro-segregation, populist, states rights southern Democrats led by George Wallace. All four groups were anti-communist, of course, with the Republican Party more zealously so.

[The claim that the United States is a democracy with two distinct political parties can be challenged on the basis of this political line-up alone. Despite American politics having moved decidedly to the right since 1964, one would be hard pressed today to separate out two ideologically distinct political parties based on the likes of Junior Bush, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bill Clinton, and Zell Miller, each politician representative of a major political tendency in their respective political parties.]

The GOP's liberal wing gained ascendancy after Goldwater's defeat, contributing to Richard Nixon's presidential victory in 1968. And, given the rightward shift in US politics over the last three decades, it's accurate to describe Nixon as America's last liberal president. He continued to push through civil rights legislation, ignobly ended the Vietnam War, recognized Red China, and implemented wage-and-price controls to combat economic stagflation, all of which were anathema to the Republican Party's conservative faction. Decimated by Goldwater's rout, GOP conservatives made a crucial strategic decision to return to their base—churches, communities, civic organizations—and rebuild their power, with the goal of eventually retaking the leadership of their party.

School boards were often the first steppingstone for these conservatives in retaking the Republican Party, followed by municipal and state governments. Formulating an ideological and programmatic consistency—admirably accomplished by the New Right and evangelical Christianity—was also critical, as was establishing effective party discipline. Moderate and liberal Republicans were labeled RINOs (Republicans In Name Only), attacked by conservative Republicans as vehemently as Democrats, subjected to political dirty tricks during Republican primaries, denied funding and support from party institutions, and shorn of power and influence once in office. In addition, Southern Democrats, long disenchanted with their party for its championing of desegregation, civil rights, and affirmative action, and denied a third-party alternative with the defeat of George Wallace's American Independent Party, deserted the Democratic Party in droves to become conservative Republicans. The conservative wing of the GOP first tasted national victory with the election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency in 1980, thanks in part to support from working-class "Reagan Democrats." Conservatism's triumphant comeback was sealed with the capture of Congress in 1994 under Newt Gingrich and the "Contract for America." The Republican Party's conservative wing has maintained its dominance in national politics every since.

[An interesting sidebar to this discussion comes from realizing that the very recent rise to national prominence of Republican neoconservatives is actually not a part of this conservative Republican "revolution." Neocons are often nowhere near as socially, politically, or economically conservative as their properly conservative brethren, and they've junked traditional conservative isolationism for an aggressive democratic imperialism that has the Republican Party aping the Democrats in initiating major military campaigns around the globe. Riding the coattails of the conservative GOP's rise to power, the neocons should be considered usurpers, not inheritors, as folks like Patrick Buchanan make clear.]

This brief analysis of how Goldwater's conservative faction of the Republican Party went from abject defeat to sweeping victory is why I don't hold much hope in things significantly changing, now that the Democratic Party has narrowly seized control of Congress. The Democrats, especially moderate and liberal Democrats, did not

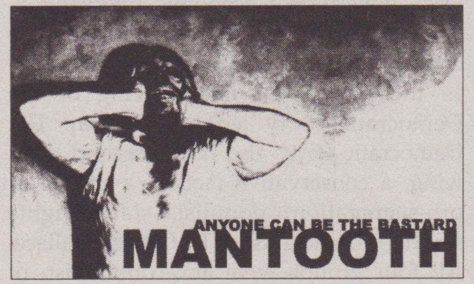
learn the vital lesson from their defeats in 1980 and 1994 that long-term success requires they return to their social base to rebuild their political power. As a consequence, the Democratic Party lacks effective organization, forceful party discipline, a unifying program, and an inspirational vision to challenge Republican hegemony. Democrats won by default in 2006. Put another way, the Democratic Party did not win, the Republican Party lost. The Iraq debacle, a string of ethical and moral scandals, a lackluster economy, and hemorrhaging federal spending eroded the Republican conservative base to a degree. More important, these issues drove independent voters *en masse* into the arms of the Democratic Party. Without anything substantive to hold them there however, it's not a matter of if, but when, the Democrats once more find themselves out of power.

Regular readers of my column know that this isn't my main beef with those who are ecstatic over the Democrats gaining majorities in the House and Senate. Even if the Democrats somehow, despite the odds, retain control of Congress for the next six years, and even if the Democrats miraculously manage to win the presidency in 2008, nothing much will change, because there isn't a rat's ass worth of difference between the Democratic and Republican parties. All the differences between the four factions of the two parties I outlined above would fit nicely into a single European political party, with room to spare, in a system of parliamentary democracy that frequently includes significant participation by fascists, communists, monarchists, and greens. Democrats got us involved in the first and second World Wars, not to mention Korea and Vietnam. And much as it took a Republican president—Nixon—to normalize relations with Communist China, it took a Democratic president—Clinton—to gut LBJ's Great Society welfare state. I predict that when Medicare and Social Security go under the axe, it's a Democratic president who will be doing the chopping.

That Barry Goldwater wouldn't exactly be welcome in today's conservative GOP is an enlightening footnote here. Goldwater hated the influence of religious extremism in politics, supported racial desegregation, considered abortion a matter of personal choice, favored the legalization of marijuana, and didn't have a problem with homosexuality. Karl Hess, in his autobiography *Mostly On The Edge*, understood that Barry Goldwater was as much the father of modern day American right-wing libertarianism as he was of GOP conservatism. In the end a self-reliant communitarian anarchist, Hess started as Goldwater's speechwriter, credited for penning the famous quote: "I would remind you that extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice! And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue!"

A sentiment that's anathema to today's GOP.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@mac.com.



This Column Blows Goats

This month's column is going to be somewhat short, as I have gone through four ideas and they've all run out of gas well before even 300 words. So what I offer you now is a short anecdote that I feel wholly sums up my life as a total idiot.

I'm going to go out on a limb here and assume that everyone reading this now shares at least a scant amount of cultural history. Nestled within this shared history is a little movie called *Wayne's World*. If you are not familiar with this fine piece of cinema, I urge you to put down this magazine and burgle (or download) yourself a copy as quickly and audaciously as possible. Just as long as you break some kind of law while you do it.

Wayne's World was released in 1992. I was ten. Needless to say, a lot of the more "mature" humor flew right over my head. At one point, Garth holds up a sign next to an unwitting guest on their television show that reads "THIS MAN BLOWS GOATS."

I was sitting next to my dad, who was chuckling to himself. Desperately wanting to know why this was funny, as I did not know the connotations of the word "blow" at age ten, I asked my dad what "blows goats" means.

"It means he farts," he told me immediately, as if he'd anticipated the question since the day I was conceived.

So I laughed. I remember laughing really hard, trying to show the movie theater that I also found this joke hilarious. I also wanted to be known as hilarious. Just like Wayne and Garth. So I incorporated "blows goats" into my brutal repertoire of witty insults that I could hurl at my classmates at lunch time.

So we would be sitting around and some kid would inevitably fart. I would exclaim, "So-and-so just blew goats!" and everyone would laugh.

"I think I have to blow goats now!"

"Shut up or I'll blow goats in your face!"

"These tater tots smell like the lunch lady blew goats all over them!"

"I think the bus driver spent all afternoon blowing goats on the bus."

Everyone would laugh uncomfortably. But they would laugh. Every time. I was the funniest kid in school, except I was the only one in school that didn't know that "blow a goat" really meant "suck a goat's cock."

It started to get old. I need to up the ante. Lunch ladies and bus drivers were easy targets. I had to step outside the safety of the lunch table or the back of the bus.

There was this kid in our class. Let's call him Jimmy. Jimmy was very quiet. Not very popular, but neither was I. There was always weird tension between the not-very-popular kids. We were always trying to upstage each other. Trying to make fools of one another so that maybe one day the cool kids would notice and pull us up out of the dregs of unpopularity.

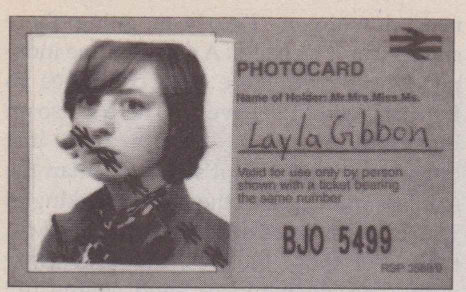
So one day in class, Jimmy raises his hand to answer a question. As soon as he's done answering, I yell out *"Jimmy blows goats"* and wait for the laughs.

No one laughs. Everyone just turns around and looks at me with this collective look of "What the fuck is your problem?"

Jimmy doesn't even turn around. All I see is his neck flare beet red. The next thing I see is my teacher ripping me out of my seat and into the hallway where I am berated for having such a filthy mouth. I'm sent to the office where they call my parents. I spend the next few days in detention.

If you boiled my life down into the simplest anecdote, it would most likely read exactly like this. Everything that has happened to me since this is essentially the same story. Over and over again.

Email me your pity:
gregory.mantooth@gmail.com



Apparently my usually incisive song ruining skills are in need of repair, because Golnar went to, and enjoyed a New Model Army show. New Model Army was my friend Katie's Goth brother's favorite band. He had a Celtic mural painted on his wall, played role-playing games in a fake cave in South London in which he wore plastic chain mail and probably wielded a plastic sword against fake, maybe also plastic, goblins, and gnomes or whatever people fight in such games. I would put New Model Army in the flesh creeping heeby jeeby "GOTH CRUSTY" genre. This clearly is something that shouldn't be allowed and must be stopped. I am not sure how I can make this happen but it's definitely one of my goals for 2K7.

"Every single hippie pagan freakout or weird transcendent goth dance at the New Model Army show made me think of you, but the band was so good that the little mocking voice in the back of my head (yours) did not win out over my enjoyment of the jams. *Song ruiner denied!"* This is what the pithy, bold Gnar said in regards to her experience and I think it pretty much says it all. Anything involving hippie pagan freakouts and weird transcendent goth dances is clearly the opposite of something the coordinator of MRR should be involved in so in the end I am understanding of her decision to hand in her coordinatorship. It's clearly time for her to move on; perhaps her and Carl Cordova will attend Burning Man next year? I hear that that is also transcendent and a hippie freakout but I am not sure how Goth Crusty you can be in the desert. Next time I see Golnar I expect she will be wearing black platform Star Wars power boots with a dread wig.

Americans always get into the randomest of English bands, I remember when the ever so dreamy Scott Moore came to England in ye olde late '90s, he rabidly wanted Newtown Neurotics records. I mean, it was probably the fact that he could finally come clean about his need to cry in public, on the street, because really, when was the last time you saw a man cry on TV? It's so oh oh embarrassing. Or maybe it was the ballad about the singer's penis. Who can say. Not me. I think the Neurotics are painfully embarrassing. It's like listening to an earnest crustier version of Neil from the Young Ones combined maybe with Rikk, also from the Young Ones talking about his feelings in a warbling, sincere yet barf inducing manner. *The horror. The horror.* I can't get behind overly sincere earnest hippie music from my homeland. I prefer the mean snotty venom of Neos or Void and always have. The Punks always ask me why I hate the music produced by the punks of my homeland, and to this I raise a quizzical eyebrow. I love Huggy Bear, most of the early Rough Trade bands, and the art punk bands that everyone likes (you know; Wire, The Homosexuals, Desperate Bicycles etc...) and if someone made me pick a buttpatch band I would say that Rudimentary Peni clearly are weird and fucked up enough to be on my team.

Anyway the point being that everyone has embarrassing musical nightmares that they are totally sold on. I would say the time I made myself love Into Another, at age 15 maybe? Whenever the *Ignaurus* LP came out anyway, well that clearly is embarrassing D&D fantasy metal. And I know all the words! I wish I had retained as much from my five years of secondary school French. Plus my inexplicable love of later period (i.e. the shameful '90s) emo straightedge is probably a mark against my name. What can I say; I was an uptight sXe riot grrrl in the dark days that we now know as the errrr '90s, so I rocked out to both Falling Forward and the Frumpies. I know all the words to the Manliftingbanner 10". There I said it. I am sure there are other items of equal hideousness lurking in my recent past, but just because I do not like the chosen sounds that the Vikings of Crust Goth Chaos Punk have endorsed from my homeland does not mean that there is anything wrong with my brain. I maybe have abused my ears with the aforementioned aural disasters on a frequent basis but I am still allowed to ruin the songs that emanated from the squats of Thatcher era England with no remorse.

I was intending to list my favorite places to consume vast amounts of food and have vast amounts of good times in the various towns I have resided in since abandoning my Endpoint – *Aftertaste* record at my mother's house, i.e. since I left home, but was so consumed with the idea of Golnar in a mass hippie trance with her fellow clog wearing shower shirkers at the New Model Army show, what could I do. I like how most of my columns contain at least a line about what I was going to write about before I launched off on whatever tangent I happen to find myself discussing. It's how I do.

Anyway, without further ado, top ten motherfuckers:

1. Condenada Thanksgiving feast. These ladies definitely took it to the next level. 2. Sex Vid/Jump Off a Building/Cult Logic/Outraged/White Boss show at Justin's mansion. Sex Vid is the best hardcore band in America easily, Die Kreuzen *Cows and Beer* versus Neos versus your brain melting into itself at the possibility that such killer jams were happening in front of yr eyes. Cult Logic was raging hardcore yet was somehow still dreamy and *cuuuuute,* secret show, secret band, totes ridic. Jump Off a Building are my favorite new local band, tho I guess they aren't that new, just new to me. I like that if the mic hadn't fucked up, the show would have been over in 20 minutes. Even with five bands playing. Perfect. 3. The B-side to the Spanish Fucked Up single that Paco put out. *So killer.* Everytime I try and write off this band they totally trick me into liking them again. I totally need the Shop Assistants/Dolly Mixture cover 7"s. I know that most of the people (i.e. dudes) that have these probably have never even heard of either band and are just holding onto them for future bribe money or something. *So lame.* 4. Naked Raygun *All Rise* 5. Finally Punk 7" excellent TX girl punk, total destruktion 6. Lungfish for winter time skulking 7. Spider and the Webs 7" on K 8. Modern Warfare 7" 9. Going to the East Coast for winter (insert obligatory Amebix reference). 10. CAVE ROM

I thought about doing a best of 2006, since this issue will be out around the first of the year, but I haven't even thought about it. So you'll have to wait until the next issue. I'll bet the anticipation is killing you, eh? OK, maybe not.

So I've actually been feeling pretty good lately. Sure, there are always day to day

outrages about the state of world, national and local affairs, but, from a personal standpoint, life ain't bad. I've been losing weight over the past year and people have been noticing it. I've been walking 2.5 to 3 miles a day since last spring and it's paid off. I know people shouldn't care about physical appearance and all that, but I have to say it's a confidence boost to be a bit thinner and it also makes me feel a lot less sluggish. It's certainly important for health reasons, especially since there's a history of heart disease and diabetes in my family.

It was also a milder-than-usual fall although the chill is finally here. I was able to walk outside in shorts on some days in the past few weeks but I'd imagine that's done for the rest of the year. Who can tell, though? It definitely has helped our heating bill a bit.

My favorite talk radio host is back on the air—Mike Malloy. He was dumped by Air America at the end of September. The network claims it was a financial decision. My feeling is it also had to do with the fact that Malloy's point of view is the furthest to the left on the network and Air America have been moving its programming towards the center. Malloy is an unapologetic left-winger who does fling around the invective quite a bit. He goes over the top, in fact. I suppose it's just as nasty as the right-wing hosts, but Malloy's fieriness provides a dose of vicarious catharsis. His nickname for Bush, "Chucklenuts," is music to my ears! You can hear his show on the Nova M Network at www.novamradio.com. And you can download/podcast the show for free, without commercials. To quote the inimitable Bruce Roehrs, FUCK YES.

Another awesome thing was that a woman named Trish, who I've been corresponding with on-line and talking to on the phone for the better part of two years, came and visited the area for Halloween. We live right near Salem and she wanted to check it out around then. It makes sense because her license plate says "BWITCHD" and I had no doubt this self-described "freak" would be completely at home there, and it turned out to be true. She almost didn't make it; she's from Cleveland and had been planning this trip since early in the year and her friend backed out on her at the last minute. Fortunately, she found another friend to make the trip and she turned out to be as incredible in person as through our correspondence. I've mentioned in my various columns/blogs/writing outlets that I crave new friendships that go beyond the superficial and that's certainly the case here.

Getting back to Salem, as you can imagine, the city is overrun by tourists during the month of October and it gets particularly crazy in the days leading up to Halloween. An interesting assortment of characters—witches, warlocks, Wiccans, goths, punks and the occasional Christian group trying to get people to denounce Satan and get saved. The residents of Salem are of two minds or opinions. A certain schizophrenia. The tourist business brings in a lot of revenue for the city, of course. Since the 300th anniversary of the Salem witch trials in 1992, the tourist trade has picked up exponentially for the month-long "Haunted Happenings" celebration. Some of the attractions—the House of Seven Gables and the old cemeteries, for instance, are more subdued. But in recent years a whole bunch of tackier businesses—horror exhibits and "museums," a ton of overpriced stores, t-shirt emporiums, etc., have turned it into a fairly typical tourist trap, albeit with a gothic twist and New England ambiance. At least they haven't opened a fucking "Cheers" bar yet. You have to go to Boston for that! And if you think I'm taking you there, guess again.

The cheesiness of some of the above annoys other residents of Salem—they think it detracts from the respectability of the city—demeans it. A few years ago, a guy had a hassle trying to get a license to offer a hearse-driven tour around the city to various sites. He did prevail eventually. There was controversy when the TV Land network put in a bronze statue of Samantha from the TV show *Bewitched* near the center of town in 2005. A few of the actors who portrayed minor characters were there for the unveiling or whatever it's called. Some felt it trivialized the meaning of the witch trials. It was vandalized shortly after being installed. During the installation ceremony, an older gentleman was arrested for disorderly conduct after holding up an anti-statue sign that blocked people's view.

In any case, that's Salem in a nutshell. People should still visit, though. If you like art museums, the Peabody-Essex Museum is a good one. There's some incredible architecture. The waterfront is beautiful. Salem Willows, in the summer, is a blast, with its video arcades, rides and all the greasy food you can eat—there's no contrivance to it, either. The Willows has been around since the 1800s. There's also a pretty cool record store, The Record Exchange, near downtown. I've been going there since I was a teenager. A real genuine independent record store that continues to flourish. Who'd believe it? There's also an independent movie theatre that just opened, as well, and it's cheaper than the soulless multiplex at the mall. Speaking of which, ever since a larger chain, AMC, took over those theatres, they did away with "bargain matinees" and charge full boat no matter the time of day. Even the matinees were up to $7.50. Jesus Christ—that's why I wait for the movies to show up on cable.

The witch trials do provide a strong lesson, as well, as certain groups of people are demonized to this day. Called terrorists, called traitors. The McCarthy era certainly conjured up those feelings and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* was an obvious, transparent allegory about the red scare. There's a witch trials memorial adjacent to an old graveyard that has 20 stone benches, each with the name of a person who was executed as a witch and the method used for the execution. A bucolic setting, but giving pause as you go from bench to bench and see the names of the victims.

Travelogue over. Let's get back to recent events. Although it's been kind of a dead zone for DIY hardcore shows lately, there have been bright spots. Kohu 63 and Hero Dishonest, two Finnish bands, played different shows at the same basement in the Allston part of Boston in October. Some of the members of these two bands sure as hell ain't kids and they still attacked with a ferocious intensity. Uncompromising and aggressive and in the perfect environment. I can't say it enough—those are the type of shows I live for.

Still, it's kind of interesting (maybe not to you but to me) that I continue to have mixed feelings about the local DIY scene. In my various columns and blogs, I've mentioned the occasional feelings of alienation, of separation from the hip hardcore crowd or whatever. That's in addition to *general* feelings of alienation of the non-punk rock variety. Boston, and any city for that matter, has always been a collection of cliques and I've tried to not restrict myself to any one of them. Last night, I had kind of an odd dream, the last I had before waking up, and I was immediately able to figure out what it meant. I went into a suburban restaurant and bumped into some people I know from Boston's punk scene. Not friends but just people I know. Acquaintances. They were seated at a long table and I wanted to sit with them but

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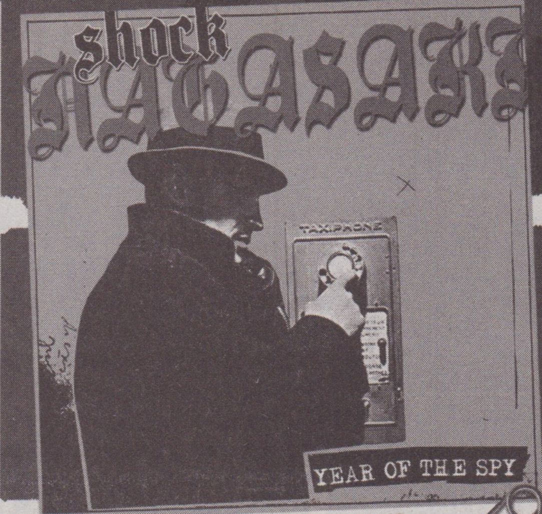

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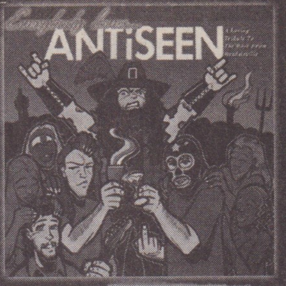

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there weren't any seats available. So I took a seat by myself at a nearby table. I did take part in the dinner conversation a bit but there was still a feeling of separation, of not being part of that group. In some ways, that's fine with me but any sort of exclusionary situation is bothersome—I admit it, because that's what it was like for me while I was growing up. In college, I'd be the guy occasionally eating by myself in the cafeteria. I'd say it's revealing subconscious feelings but they've been in my regular consciousness for quite awhile, anyway.

So, in spite of that moment of self-absorbed reflection, this column is a bit more upbeat than usual, wouldn't you say? NO? Then fuck off...

MUSIC REVIEWS

BAD BRAINS – Live At CBGB 1982 (MVD, DVD)

One of my favorite stories to tell the young'uns is about how I saw the Bad Brains in the spring of '82 at a tiny club called Maverick's. Don't go looking for it, it's not there (thank you Marty DiBergi—look it up, if you don't know what I'm talking about). They show up close to last call, set up, plug in and play one of the greatest sets I've ever seen in my life. 15 to 20 minutes of all hardcore. No rose-colored glasses. Seeing the performances on the DVD, recorded at three shows around Christmas of '82, proves my point. Even with the occasional bad camera angles, lights going out, sound issues, the chaos is captured. In fact, it's apropos for that to happen because that's an accurate reflection of a Bad Brains show, at that point, anyway. I'm still not a fan of their reggae songs but that's what the skip button on the remote is for—OK, I DID watch a bit of the reggae but, sorry, it remains boring. The Brains were in peak form. Incredible musicianship—Earl flailing away with precision even at the high velocity, thundering bass-lines from the invisible Darryl Jennifer (I don't think he's in the shot at anytime) and Dr. Know knocking out sick power-chords and lead runs, looking as if he's having the time of his life playing those riffs. HR, of course, moves around like a maniac, sings out the words at a rapid-fire clip and works himself into a frenzy. I'm using hyperbole here—maybe overdoing it but, damn, it's killer and one of the coolest things is to see the faces of the people in the audience, dancing, diving, singing along—then there's one kid playing air drums on the side of the stage. Not too many extras—just a brief interview segment with a few fans. In any case, this is an essential release. A document, not a documentary and just seeing the source material, without commentary, is a better experience. (PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456, www.musicvideodistributors.com)

BURIAL – Hungry Wolves (HeartFirst, 7" EP)

The latest from the powerhouse known as Burial. Bruising songs with angrily spat out vocals and a tandem of hardcore, crust and some metal—kind of a modern-day Japanese hardcore sound, if I had to pinpoint it. In any case, the rampaging qualities are in full effect and the cowbell for "Insanity" is a cool touch. (Landsberger Str. 146, 80339, München GERMANY, www.heartfirst.net)

COBRA NOIR – Barricades (Chainsaw Safety, CD)

The second missive from Cobra Noir. Dark, howling and heavy, but there's also an affecting warmth here, an enveloping quality on the slower songs. The lyrics are fragmentary, expressing feelings of helplessness in a decaying world. OK, that sounds kind of pretentious—I suppose it's a different way of saying, holy shit, the world is fucked up and the doominess of the music captures that mood. A reliance on speed on several tracks, although the mid-tempo pound of "Monuments" stands out here. I'm not always into this heavier sound but these guys make it memorable. (PO Box 260318, Bellrose, NY 11426, www.chainsawsafetyrecords.com)

COLDBRINGER – Lust and Ambition (DeadIdeas, LP)

I've been getting a fair number of records these days with hand-screened covers and the Coldbringer LP has some striking artwork. A stingingly melodic punk sound that sounds like a cross between Born Dead Icons' doomy sound with Leatherface's tuneful properties. Vocalist John Wilkerson (formerly with From Ashes Rise) has Frankie Stubbs' timbre, albeit in a lower register. I know comparisons suck but that's the best way I can describe it. The people in this band have played in more "crusty" or thrashy bands and this marks a departure away from D-beat and epic qualities. A warmth along with the power and vigor. (PO Box 851, Austin, TX 78767, www.deadideas.com)

FOR THE WORSE – Blood, Guts, Going Nuts (Bridge Nine, CD)

Mike McCarthy and his merry band of chaos-makers return and the title is a good description of their live show. It also goes for the attitude—confrontational, blunt but also with a sense of humor. For The Worse could stand for Fuck The World—or is it the world is fucked? Either way, the sentiment is there and it's summed up by "We're All Going To Die." There's also something of a poop fixation—their "Couldn't Give Two Shits About The Kids" album visualized it on the front cover and "#2" and "When The Shit Hits The Fans" cover that topic. Slapshot is a strong musical influence on this band, except that McCarthy's vocals sound like a yippy dog with a case of distemper, instead of Choke's bellicose growl. Thrash and more anthemic punk share space here and it's a careening ride. (35 Congress St. #336 Salem, MA 01970, www.bridge9.com)

FPO – Giving Birth In Order To Kill (Third Party, 7" EP)

The problem with FPO, who hail from Macedonia, is they have some great slower riffs that are wasted when the blast comes in. A common malady for this kind of hardcore. "You Call It Life," for instance, flows from moody quietude into double-speed mayhem. Once and for all, *control the speed...* slow down a bit. It works a lot better. (21 Nancy Lane, Amherst, NY 14228, www.thirdxparty.com)

GUILT LUST – s/t (Fun With Smack, LP)

Imagine a combination of Fucked Up's muscular punk with driving 80's-era DC emo-core as the main melodic element. That's what you have from this Western Mass. band. The vocalist DJ Podolski was with the raging hardcore band Last In Line (he's also with the Irritators now) and this is something slightly different. The vocals still sound angry, although DJ actually *sings* on occasion and, at its heart, Guilt Lust are a hardcore band. And already a pretty damned good one, at that. (29 Westgate Rd., Apt. 2, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, www.myspace.com/funwithsmack)

KORO – Speed Kills (Sorry State, 12")/700 Club (Sorry State, 7" EP)

Koro were an early-80's hardcore band from Knoxville, TN, and what we have here is a long-overdue reissue of their 7" EP and the first release of their unissued 12". The latter is a true hardcore archaeological find. Speedy yet incredibly tight. These guys played incredibly well. Occasional metal guitar licks pop through and this was ahead of the "crossover" thing.. None of the songs on "700 Club"

exceed a minute and the impact is pure hit and run. The 12" has primitive sound quality in comparison but the rawness works to Koro's advantage. Some of the songs are repeated from the 7" and there's also a bit more diversity in the arrangements. "Hello, Mom and Dad!" has a slight Big Boys and Minutemen flavor with the funkier rhythm on the verses. And a few of the songs exceed the one minute mark. A few of the songs cover the anti-Reagan/anti-evangelist topics of the day but there are also lyrics about odd and obnoxious people they encounter the their theme song "Koro" is about a penis disease, which is where the band took their name. The 12" is accompanied by an insert that has an extensive interview with their guitarist Carl Snow. Classic, essential hardcore. (1102 N. Greensboro St., Carrboro, NC 27510, www.deepfrybonanza.com/storrystate)

MODERAT LIKVIDATION – Nitad/Marionett I Kedjor/Köttahuva (Havoc, 7" EPs)

So what we have are three 7" EPs from this early-80's Swedish hardcore band—the *Nitad* EP was pressed on vinyl in '83, *Marionett* was originally a demo tape and *Köttahuva* was also a tape-only release recorded by Swedish Public Service radio. Somehow, I can't image NPR recording this kind of band and, if they did, all the Republipukes plus Joe Lieberman would be calling it filth and want to zero-fund it yet again. Anyway, all three of these EPs are also combined onto a CD. So what's it sound like, you ask? Raw hardcore inspired by Discharge and the other UK suspects and they mix the tempos a bit. "Enola Gay," for instance, is slow and brooding and "Anti Fag" (an anti-smoking song) has a similar tempo to Discharge's "Protest and Survive," albeit without the guitar pyrotechnics. The Finnish bands also drew inspiration from similar influences but the vocals here have a rougher cadence. "Marionnet" is my favorite of the three—the rougher sound works to its advantage. Taken together, it'll provide the minimum daily rippin' requirement. (PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.havocrex.com)

PERMANENT TRIP – s/t (Shock To The System, 7" EP)

The vinyl debut for Albany's Permanent Trip and the last recording with guitarist Nate Wilson. Jason Krak voices the words (warning—alliteration alert) like a bear with his paw caught in a trap. Twists and turns—"Divider" starts as a dirge and ends with some double-speed thrash. "Losing Ground" begins with hammering stop/start riffing and then settles in a mid-tempo jam with wah-wah (is it?) on the guitar—maybe it's weed-induced because the only thank yous on the list are the guy who put out the record and marijuana. "Stasi" takes on more of a mid-to-fast attack. Not the catchiest songs but they have presence. (PO Box 300991, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, www.shocktothesystem-records.com)

RABIES – Disease Core (Sorry State, 7" EP)

Skate-thrash-punk and repeat. Actually, these guys have a *Jealous Again* period Black Flag feel, as well and let's not forget the bass calisthenics for "The Man With The Flute (Is Drilling My Head)"—huh? That's about as poetic as they get—otherwise, you have sentiments such as "I have RABIES and I fucked you mom." I remember how snotty some of those skate punk kids could be and carry it over into whatever band they chose to start. Rabies fit that bill and fit it well. (1102 N. Greensboro St., Carrboro, NC 27510, www.deepfrybonanza.com/sorrystate)

RATOS DE PORAO–Homem Inimigo Do Homem (Alternative, Tentacles, CD)

Well, I tried to find the English lyrics on-line, but no luck. It doesn't really matter. You see words like pedofilia, involuntario, apocalipse and forca in the titles, the subject matter isn't hard to figure out. Neither is the music. RDP went back to the hardcore roots, in recent years, while hanging onto the metal/crossover thing as well. Some of the guitar riffs here conjure up Die Kreuzen and Voivod (and Away from Voivod once told me they got their guitar sound from Die Kreuzen). Gordo still growls as if he's permanently constipated, accompanied by the band's murderous assault. And they look so content in a field of flowers on the back cover. I imagine the machetes are hidden away for later use. Maybe on the audience. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141, www.alternativetentacles.com)

RIBZY–'81-'85 Recordings (Vinehell, CD)

This San Jose band didn't release much during its tenure but here's a collection of 30 songs, including one recorded in 2004 and it doesn't sound dissimilar to the 80s era material. The band were originally called Ribsy. They made an appearance on the "Not So Quiet On The Western Front," but there's a different version of that song, "Collapse," featured here. Snarly skate punk that was certainly influenced by Black Flag to an extent. Interestingly, the band changed vocalists around '82 and the two voices (Derek Csimma, followed by Dion Trottier) don't sound radically different from each other—adolescent snot 'n rant. Standard West Coast punk although they could branch out on occasion—"Sugar Sugar" (not the Archies song) was gloomier sounding, for instance. A punk rock footnote and that's meant in a positive sense. (PO Box 36131, San Jose, CA 95158, www.vinehell.com)

RUIDOSA INMUNDICIA–De Ana Vez (Thought Crime, 7" EP)

Heart-racing hardcore. Fast all the way through, with the occasional slowdown. The rabid vocals are along the same lines as Saira from Detestation, except angrier sounding and trading off with a male counterpart. The band is from Austria but the lyrics in Spanish and two of the members are from Chile, originally. Literally no space between songs, one rager after another, applied lethally. (Thomas Franke, Muskauer Strasse 19, 10997 Berlin GERMANY, distributed by HeartFirst, www.heartfirst.net)

SGT. SLAUGHTER–s/t (demo)

There are some good bands hiding in the outlying burbs of Boston and Sgt. Slaughter is one of them. Four songs of raw hardcore influenced by early Boston stuff and Poison Idea, though that's not the entire story. "Home On The Strange," the song that leads off this tape, has an ominous intro to get the blood flowing and then it kicks into high gear, where it stays. Good thrashin' hardcore with hot riffing and string-scraping leads. (PO Box 696, Carlisle, MA 01741, commuterxman@yahoo.com)

SOLID DECLINE–Adorning The Void (HeartFirst, dbl. 7" EP)

10 songs spread over two 7"s and packaged in a triple panel foldout for this German band's latest release. Three of the guys from Solid Decline used to be in Y and I like this band a lot more. The band's speed is better controlled and there are some killer melodic guitar lines to go along with the burn. The 80's-era German band Inferno used to do something similar—aggression but also managing to add, for want of a better term, a tuneful sting. In any case, it's impressive. (Landsberger Str. 146, 80339, München GERMANY, www.heartfirst.net)

THE SPARK–Nobody's Laughing (Mike Fitzgerald, LP)

There are clowns lowering a casket into the ground in the cover illustration and this is the Spark's burial party. On this 12" release, it's more of the band's fast, energetic hardcore punk. They admit up front, on "Same Old Story," *"we're not out to break new ground, don't wanna be the next big thing/we just play our hearts out every night, and we're still fucking pissed."* Some may chuckle at those lines, a smarmy grin on their faces. That is an accurate description for this band, it's a sentiment simply stated but the enthusiasm in the playing and direct lyrics make for an enjoyable combination. "To The Lions" takes on so-called "conservative punk," lamenting the replacement of content with image. I do have to say that this style of hardcore is something of a conservative approach, fitting a pattern and for some people, it's been *about* image, looking a certain way. Still, it's an approach that continues to appeal to this grizzled, jaded music fan. (653 Evelyn Ave., East Meadow, NY 11554-5427)

VERBAL ABUSE–Rocks Your Liver (Malt Soda, CD)

The band's second album where the lineup was reshuffled, bringing in vocalist Scott Wilkins and some extra guitar players to complement Joie Mastrokalos. Recorded in '86, at the time where the crossin' over between metal and hardcore had begun. Verbal Abuse embraced that sound, holding onto the scrappy punk roots a bit. The title track is a faster rewrite of Queen's "We Will Rock You," followed by "Metal Melissa The Pissa," with a thrash sound sharing commonality with their first album. The flash-riffing emerges with more prominence for "Set Me Free," "Worth A Try" and "The Chase." The album is appended with bonus studio tracks and not-bad-sounding live material. It definitely comes across as a hardcore band trying to be more "metal" and, while a bit thin-sounding, production-wise, it's a fun album. I'm still more likely to listen to the full-on hardcore of "Just An American Band," though. (PO Box 617127, Orlando, FL 32861, www.maltsoda.com)

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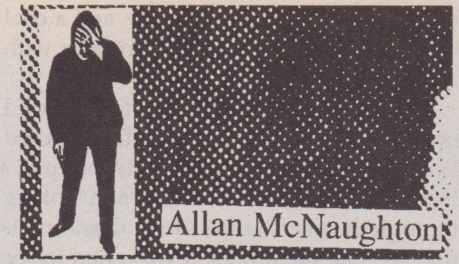

Killer.

Paul and Jason shared a flat on South Van Ness. It was an old Victorian and in a bit of a state but the landlord was never about so they could do what they liked. They'd painted the walls some decent colors and there was loads of Jason's art lying about so it looked OK. They worked at a yuppie health food store so money was pretty tight. They always seemed to know someone who was DJing somewhere but hanging out in bars required buying drinks. They spent a lot of time on the couch, drinking 40s of malt liquor, watching afternoon TV meant for old people and stay-at-home mums. *Colombo* was their favorite programme.

There was this one guy they'd always see around the Mission. Tall and skinny but with these dark, serious eyes. He frequented the same thrift stores. Everyone was looking for the same shit. Velvet paintings, kitsch ashtrays, 70s McDonalds glasses. This guy was always hunched over the stacks of used vinyl. What was he looking for? Everyone knew there was nothing good in those stacks. If someone had something good to sell they went over to Berkeley and sold it at Amoeba. (This was before they opened up the massive Amoeba in an old bowling alley on Haight Street). The other thing about him was he looked exactly like the murderer on an episode of *Colombo* that seemed to come around on TV every other month or so. It got to the point where Paul and Jason were calling him "Killer" to just about everyone except the man himself. "Saw Killer at the corner store today; he was buying Anchor Steam. Must have dough." It got so that just about every white, gay hipster in the Mission knew him as Killer, although he was none the wiser.

Well back then the neighborhood was like a tiny desert island. People hardly ever left. The beach? That was miles away—the streetcar took like an hour, are you crazy? Especially for artists and musicians, and the people who dressed like artists and musicians. Rent was still cheap and you could work in a pizza place and hang around the rest of the time trying to look like an artist or a musician. No one remembered how it happened but one night Jason went home from the Uptown with Killer and soon after that they began dating. Eventually the rest of us got to know him too and he turned out to be not that scary. The name Killer became ironic as it couldn't be further from the truth. I forget what his real name was actually.

One night everyone went back to Killer's apartment on 18th Street after the bars closed and he played records till 4am. We found out what he'd been looking for all this time in the thrift stores—absolutely anything. He had wall after wall stacked with albums, the kind of stuff you find for 25 cents in any thrift store in America. You know, some of it was good and some of it was shit but it was all there. Genesis "Invisible Touch"—check. Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass—check. Michael Jackson "Bad"—check. Plus the obligatory marching band, gospel, and classical Christmas-themed compilations. He wasn't a discerning record collector, like I was used to, he just collected anything, so long as it was cheap and he couldn't recall having it already. Fair play to him. Statistically, there had to be something amazing in those stacks, but I wasn't going to spend hours inhaling dust-borne germs trying to find it.

Not long after that people started drifting away. Paul moved back to Boston and Jason moved to New York. Last I heard he was making music videos. I still see Killer around from time to time. Word must have got to him about the nickname because now he has it tattooed on the back of his neck.

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By the time you read this, Christmas will have come and gone. I've been good all year, so I know Santa will have brought me the $100,000 Velvet Underground acetate I've always wanted. I hope he was equally generous to all of you.

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Traveling Tales (Part 2)

Friday, Sept. 15, 2006. Auf Wiedersehen Deutschland

The alarm went off, a damn electronic

buzzing noise bringing reality crashing in all too soon. I only wanted to put the covers over my head, stay warm and go back to sleep, let my plane leave without me. *Nein*. After a short two weeks, it was time to go.

I groaned and crawled out of bed; put on my same clothes again, tied my boots and trudged downstairs to meet the day. Elianna was at the door already, with more punk post for me to carry back, and wanting to say goodbye. My backpack was now full of records and packages for people back in the States, along with my tripod, my video equipment and a few clothes. Stivie and I left a little late, and we had to carry my two heavy bags, walking quickly to the Bremen train station. Soon, we were on our way north east to Hamburg, drinking the coffee we had brought with us, waking up into the day, green fields rolling outside the windows.

A couple of hours later in Hamburg, it was good to see Jon again. The three of us walked around town, found a nice café near the Flora to sit and chat for awhile, and then visited the Frida Kahlo exhibition. The museum was packed, there was a long line to get in, and the tickets were cheap. However, I was disappointed that the exhibition had only a small selection of her paintings. What I enjoyed the most were the candid black and white photos of Frida at the end, images of the artist in her studio painting, looking directly at the camera with her powerful gaze. I tried to imagine the strength of her character, and the beauty and richness of her personality that comes through her images of pain, suffering, conflict, beauty, death and love.

At the bus station, it was hard to say goodbye, *bis bald mein Freund*. But Jon and I continued our adventures, catching the coach to the tiny airport at Lübeck, where we waited for hours playing word games, and I found a machine that dispensed free coffee! After our short flight to Stansted, it was another long bus ride into London, and then running down the street to catch the last city bus across town back to Hackney. It was past midnight by the time we put our bags down again in Active headquarters, a long day of traveling, now back in the UK for another week before heading home.

Monday, Sept. 18, Pogo Café

The weekend went by in a busy colorful blur, and I'm just now able to take a break, enjoying the sun, sitting on the grass in Hackney Downs in east London. People are walking their dogs, cycling by, but mostly the park is fairly empty, and a cool breeze rustles the tree leaves, bringing with it the scent of fall.

On Saturday morning, Jon, Marta and I headed over to the London DIY Record Fair, and the day was filled with Paco playing tunes on the sound system, and looking through the many tables of vinyl, and chatting with all the punks. It was good to see Sean, and hear that Hard Skin has tours in the works and are still going strong. Sunday was relaxed and interesting, as Jon and I had brunch at Pogo (and I got some preliminary video shots), and I got to try a British vegan version of "American Breakfast." The pancakes were excellent, but without biscuits or bacon, not nearly enough fake butter or fake meat, it fell slightly short of being a true "American style" gluttonous brunch. It was nice to see everyone at Pogo again, Martin making smoothies behind the bar, Martin B. washing dishes, Nhatt Attack cooking, and the place filled with people chatting and eating, enjoying the afternoon, and a new art exhibition on the walls.

That night Jon and I saw a movie at the Rio Cinema, site of one of the oldest moving picture cinemas in London, first built in 1915. Just another odd piece of history, thinking about the age of things. After the film, we snuck up to the cinema's roof and played chess, the board on the roof's edge bathed in the blue light of the Rio's modern neon sign. It was hard to concentrate on my queen's moves, looking down at the traffic of Kingsland Road and the London skyline, enjoying the moment and the view.

Today, in the park, once again I am sitting with video camera in tow, collecting my thoughts. I spent the afternoon interviewing the core collective group of Pogo Café, the worker co-operative, volunteer-run place in Hackney that offers, "Delicious Vegan Food and Alternative Culture." Pogo is many things: a place to eat amazing vegan chocolate cake, a spot to meet friends and hang out, a fun place to volunteer and pick up vegan cook zines, have art showings on the walls, watch radical films, attend a presentation by activists reporting from Palestine, or listen to a dark acoustic country band, and above all, a creative space always in the works.

I asked Davy, who has been working at Pogo since its beginning: "What has kept you inspired?" He replied, "The customers, and the crew, the people involved. It's such a mix of people it's unbelievable. I've been here the whole two years and I'm just addicted to this place, and just the whole community aspect, as it's very much a community-based place."

I asked Nhatt, another person who has been involved since the beginning as a volunteer cook and organizer, "Why is Pogo important to you?" She replied, "The cool thing about Pogo is that it started with a few mates sitting around talking about how great it would be to open a vegan café, and it actually happened! And we're still doing that. Someone will say, 'We should have film nights,' and then we actually have film nights. How often does that happen? We can have ideas of what we want to do, and have the space and ability to actually make it happen."

If you are in London, definitely check this place out. I find the cake addictive and the "staff" all rock. Sunday brunch is a good time to go, or try the daily evening special. Four stars. (76 Clarence Road, Hackney, London E5 8HB. www.pogo-cafe.co.uk)

Tuesday, Sept 19, Following Banksy Through the Streets

Today I went on a walking tour with Martin, looking at graffiti, most notably of the Banksy pieces, videotaping again for Channel Zero.

Martin began by explaining how he learned about graffiti in London, "I'm not an expert. It's just that I've spent a lot of time wandering around the streets like a stray dog. People look at me when I take photographs, because people are always a bit surprised I'm taking a photograph of a wall."

Banksy's work is interesting because it is usually clever, with some sort of comment on society and life. As he wrote in his recent book, *Banksy Wall and Piece*, a collection of his previous chap books with many photos of his pieces in London and around the world, "The people who run our cities don't understand graffiti because they think nothing has the right to exist unless it makes a profit…The people who truly deface our neighborhoods are the companies that scrawl their giant slogans across buildings and buses trying to make us feel inadequate unless we buy their stuff…Well, they started this fight and the wall is the weapon of choice to hit them back."

Martin, Nhatt and I spent about four hours wandering around the working class neighborhoods of Shoreditch, South Hackney, Brick Lane and Hoxton area, and I was able to see several nice pieces: a small rat opening a lock, another rat with wire cutters, a little girl holding a balloon, a riot cop with a smiley face standing against a

wall, Bush and Blair dressed in banana suits with banana guns, an enormous rat holding a file and a fork against the world.

The last piece I saw on our walk was the famous Banksy combat helicopters adorned with pink bows. We could only see a small portion of the stencil, just enough to see that it was actually there, as the rest of the large piece was obscured by a new advertising billboard built onto the wall. How fitting, the combat helicopters lost in battle, a message fighting to be heard, drowning against the propaganda of the profit makers.

(Martin Bull gives free tours, as a way to share his knowledge of where all these amazing pieces of street art can be seen. It's lots of fun! Check out www.shellshockphotos.co.uk for more information, and also a gallery of his photographs. I suggest you bring chocolate, and relax with coffee afterwards.)

Wednesday, Sept. 20, Active Distribution

The view from the 19th floor of the tower block in Hackney was stunning, as the sky was clear and blue with just a tinge of haze from the heat of the day. Brick row houses stretched for miles, leading to the skyscrapers of London's business district downtown.

Today, I caught Jon and Marta long enough to ask them about Active Distribution, their long-running project of getting anarchist literature into people's hands as cheaply as possible, using DIY networks, publishing pamphlets themselves, and doing it all with volunteer labor. The two of them do most of the work, supplemented by a large crew of friends who occasionally help out with rides to gigs, deliver punk post, do odd jobs, fold pamphlets or help out at stalls.

Sitting in the kitchen, surrounded by Jon's odd collection of mugs on every wall, once again looking through my viewfinder, I asked, "How have you kept Active going all these years? What inspires you, and practically speaking, how do you keep it going?"

Marta replied, "What allows us to keep it going is the economics of it, because we do it voluntarily, we still have to have jobs to pay the bills and be able to live. As for inspirations, I strongly believe in things like animal rights, and certain aspects of anarchism, anti-capitalism, and alternative ways of living. Apart from setting an example by living it, which I think is very important, I like to spread those ideas to other people, and by doing it, I get a lot of feedback. It makes your work worthwhile when you get an email from someone on the other side of the world saying how happy they are that they received a book or a t-shirt or a CD that they couldn't find anywhere else. That's really inspirational and that's why I do it."

Jon added, "If someone is interested in doing a stall or distribution, especially in Europe, get in contact. We're here to help supply other people to do that and get those ideas out there. We've been here a long time now, so we've seen people come and go in the scene. It can be kind of depressing; it can also be inspiring when we see new people coming in. But the core ideas of anarchism have been around a lot longer than we have, and they also will be in the future. It's good to feel we're doing our part of keeping that going. And hopefully someday it will really take hold here, and every where, and there will be a big change."

There was a long pause, and then Marta and I laughed, Jon seemed so hopeful for the future. A big change a comin'? The ideas of anarchism really taking hold? But I suppose what is the point, if we don't work towards our dreams of a better world, and believe that world is possible?

(Check out the massive catalog, and what they're up to: www.activedistribution.org, Active Distribution, BM ACTIVE, London, WC1N 3XX, England. Their web site is also a good place to look for links to what's going on in London, both anarchist projects and punk. They also have released some great music, such as the Dirt compilation, Harum Scarum, and the excellent US band The Profits. Ha!)

56@ Infoshop and Social Centre

After the morning's interview, Jon and I were soon biking to South London, camera bag and tripod strapped onto my bike's back rack, while I worked very hard not to be hit by the enormous buses, and not scream while dodging cars on the roundabouts. Yikes! Biking in London is quite the thrill to say the least.

At 56@, an infoshop that I have written about before in my column, I interviewed Georgina and Hoyden, two amazing women who have been volunteering and helping out at the infoshop for the past two years. 56@ has been archiving Anarchist and radical materials since 1991, and the small place is completely packed wall to wall with literature and books, all very nicely labeled too, I must add. The place also sells records, CDs, fanzines, chocolate, stripped socks (my favorite!), Zapatista coffee, t-shirts and pins and patches. I love the atmosphere of the place, as every time I go in there is always an interesting conversation going on, travelers from around the world coming and going looking for information about London or just visiting, someone making tea, and music playing on the stereo. Oh yeah, and there is even a bike workshop on the porch. Right on.

"What is the mission of 56@?" I asked, sitting outside on the porch, under the new roof I saw the collective build last year.

Georgina replied, "To be a convergence space for information. We're really moving now to having information about events that are happening around the world, protests around the world and other radical events that are happening. Also, to be able to share the radical history of London, and around the world, that isn't so easy to find in libraries and you're not taught it in school. Our archive is pretty extensive, and the information is here that you might not be able to find in other places."

"Why do you volunteer?"

Hoyden replied, "I volunteer because it's fun, and we sell things that you won't find other places."

Anarchists having fun while doing serious work? Of course! (If you are in London, make this stop #1. 56 Crampton Street, London, SE17 3AE UK, www.56a.org.uk)

Last Hours

After 56@, Jon and I biked through the city center, and along the Thames at night, stopping to catch the view of Parliament and Big Ben across the water. Then past London Eye, the World's Largest Ferris Wheel, as such a ridiculously large thing really needed to be built. We ate vegan treats from cardboard boxes outside Beatroot while sitting on the sidewalk; watching and laughing at the well-dressed club goers of Soho cruise by. Then, off again, one more interview to finish this day, my last day of this September European traveling tale.

We arrived at Ed and Natalie's flat, co-coordinators of *Last Hours*, and I set up my camera in the fanzine's new office space (which previously served as a roommate's small bedroom). Ed and Natalie sat on the couch, talking about the difficulties of distribution, and how they manage to consistently produce a fanzine that in many ways is the *MRR* of the UK, except with a color cover. Basically, it's lots and lots of work, but like other dedicated DIY zinesters, they are addicted and dedicated to keeping the project going. They both work jobs that cover rent and expenses, and manage to fit the zine into their "free" time. I don't have

any quotes from my interview for you here, but from their website:

What is Last Hours? "*Last Hours* is a quarterly punk music fanzine. It contains interviews, columns, articles, DIY guides, short stories, reviews and anything else we feel like. We try to cover the cultural and political aspects of punk and DIY as much as we do the music."

Do you have any guidelines on what you do/don't publish?

"There are few obvious ones: No racism, no sexism, no homophobia. Beyond that it should have some relevance to *Last Hours* as a zine, we're not going to print a Britney Spears interview. By the same token though there are things that we think are totally punk that have nothing to do with music - food co-ops, community gardens etc. - are all awesome examples of how DIY can be used to make the world better."

Hell yeah, I highly recommend you check out this zine, especially if you like *MRR* but are interested in a British and European view of things. My personal favorite thing about it is the columnists, the different perspectives and personalities and the cool English slang, also the interesting and helpful DIY guides. (You can find out more at: www.lasthours.org.uk or write them at Last Hours, Po Box 382, 456-458 The Strand, London, WC2R 0DZ.)

Thursday, Sept. 21, Fuck LA.

4:14PM. LA airport Gate 43.

Damn, what a trip to be back in the US, *especially* to be in Los Angeles. Once again, it was hard to say goodbye this morning, and I had to leave too soon. My last image of Jon is him waving goodbye and smiling from his beloved bike as I went down the stairs to the Underground, off to the airport and back to SF. He surprised me by following my bus to the station, just to make sure I got off at the right stop for the airport (as I get notoriously lost!) and we hugged goodbye one more time before I had to go.

Right now, thousands of miles away from this morning, here in the LA airport, I keep catching odd looks from people. Maybe its because I'm surrounded by well-groomed women with nice hair and professionally manicured fingernails, and men in Polo shirts and casual business attire, ironed slacks and suit jackets. It's mostly all white people looking like they came out of some bland catalogue; some of the adults are accompanied by matching children, small versions of themselves.

Me, I'm wearing the same long shorts I've worn every day for the past three weeks, a pair of striped socks and my much loved vegan 14-hole boots I bought in Minneapolis a couple of years ago. My hair is a wild rat's nest of dyed red curls that hang as far down as my earlobes.

I'm dirty, most likely smell bad, with two hours of sleep, and have been traveling for the past 16 hours. I'm haggard, pissed off looking, disgusted by the business and plastic class, writing in my little black traveling book, scratching notes about my trip, looking backwards in time, thinking about the places I've been and the people I had to leave behind.

Jet lag is a modern phenomenon. My grandfather described the feeling to a journalist when he first experienced flying in a jet in the '60s: "I have gone forward, and left my soul behind." Today, I have crossed an ocean and two continents, the glaciers and ice of Greenland, and over mountains and deserts of North America. As we take to the air again towards San Francisco, the water sparkles hard, and I see the Pacific for the first time in a month.

During the long trip, looking out the window at the world below, I thought about all the people I captured on video on this trip, about why I do this, and what inspires me. In common with the people I interviewed, I have a regular job that supports me, and I do all of this in my "free" time because I enjoy it.

As Banksy wrote in his book, "A lot of people never use their initiative because no-one told them to." We are conditioned by society to fill certain roles, take on certain jobs, be particular people, live a certain way—whether we like it or not. I am inspired by people who break down these walls, and create something new, do something they love or are dedicated to—whether it is making a fanzine, painting, archiving anarchist literature, doing a distro, setting up punk shows or giving free tours around the city.

Our capitalist culture doesn't encourage this type of behavior, volunteering and doing things because we have a dream or it makes us happy or satisfied or fills a creative urge or works towards a better world. Capitalist culture would much rather sell you entertainment, have you buy and consume rather than actively create, and have you work a job that fills their needs at your expense. Fuck that. Have fun with life, volunteer, start your own projects, step out of the prescribed mold, and don't forget to follow your dreams.

End Notes

Clips from *Channel Zero* can be found at: www.channelzerosf.wordpress.com. Next month, it's tales from th' Bay! Cheers and Solidarity, Erika (e_bitchcrew@yahoo.com)

Last month I went into a great bit of detail about touring Canada. Here are a few important things I omitted. First is crossing back into the USA with your merch. Even if you meticulously document that you brought all the merch into Canada in the first place and are only bringing back what's left the customs officers have the option of making you pay import duty on everything you are bringing back. When I asked about this at the border I was told that "those items have been involved in the commerce of Canada and now they are entering the US just the same as if they were made in Canada." I got lucky at the border and the US customs officers got tired of arguing with me about the value of records and just made me pay $5 to get out of their office. However, one thing that I've learned when dealing with these kinds of officials is to be prepared for the worst case scenario. Maybe eight or nine times out of ten you get off without a glance, but there's always the one time that someone decides to be a jerk and hit you with every rule and regulation in the book. Therefore, I would once again recommend taking just as much merch as you think you need into Canada rather than trying to cross in and out of Canada with a ton of merch in the case that you get the one customs officer who decides to really put the screws into you.

Another thing I forgot to mention last time is cell phones and communication. If you are American your cell phone will most probably work in most of Canada. However, you will almost certainly be paying some kind of roaming charge, plus possibly an international call charge to call out of Canada back to the USA. Also, if you have some kind of wireless handheld/smart phone it might not get internet connectivity in Canada. I tried to keep my phone use to an absolute minimum and still came home to a $500 phone bill. Calling cards are of course an obvious solution, and pay phones are thankfully more common in Canada than in the US

these days.

I'd like to heartily thank everyone who helped out with the Regulations Canada tour, especially the promoters who went the distance to make sure we had good shows, food and places to stay. Regulations are in Australia as I write, but unfortunately I couldn't afford to take time off to go with them after doing the Canada tour.

Aside from the hardcore scene I really enjoyed Canada. Since I live in the northern part of the US (just five hours from the border) it was perhaps not as much of a culture shock as if I was from Las Vegas or something. Canada strikes me as a lot like the US but improved by about 15-25%. It's cleaner, there's less crime, generally a high standard of living for ordinary people, and decent quality jobs, housing, and health care. It still has many of the same problems as the US, but most of them are a result of Canada's proximity to the USA rather than one of intent. The big Canadian cities are cosmopolitan, refined, and seem to offer a high standard of urban living. In fact, the level of density and access to transit in Canadian cities seems to make them much more sustainable, not to mention interesting, than American commuter-oriented cities. However, there is a significant amount of urban sprawl on the American pattern to offset the urban cores. It does seem like it would be easier to live without a car in a place like Vancouver, Toronto, or Montreal than in all but a handful of US cities

Record store-wise, for the most part Canada is as picked clean as any where else. I did score a few records here and there though. Edmonton has an outstanding store, Octopus Ink Records, which is run by the guys behind the Unrest Label. This store was the best stocked store with rare crust and metal vinyl I've seen outside of Japan. I went to something like twelve record stores in Montreal and didn't buy a single record. There were some cool stores, but there were some other stores that I couldn't understand how they stayed open with such picked-over stock. But perhaps you can reference my column of a few months back on how tough it is to keep an independent store open to get some ideas.

I was going to talk about Canadian Hardcore in this column, but I think I'd like to dedicate a whole column to this subject in a future issue. Now, for a change of pace I'd like to recommend a book to *MRR*'s readers. As I've mentioned before, I studied history in college. I have a great interest in the late 19th and early 20th century. Of late I've been really interested in European Colonialism. My interest has mostly been in the Russian and British empires, but I stumbled upon a book which is probably the best popular book on the subject of Colonialism entitled *King Leopold's Ghost* by one Adam Hochschild. *King Leopold's Ghost* tells the story of the conquest and exploitation of central Africa by King Leopold II of Belgium in the later part of the 19th and early part of the 20th Century. We rarely think of tiny Belgium as a colonial power. The Congo shows up in the news every few years just as some fucked up part of Africa with another coup, war or famine and then quickly recedes from the headlines as the commonplace misery of Africa often does. But this book was a real eye opener. Hochschild tells the story of a horrific campaign of subjugation and exploitation that is blood-curdling even by the standards of the horrors of the 20th century. Millions of Africans were enslaved and/or worked to death in a colony that was basically run to squeeze out every last ounce of profit to feed the mania of one power- and profit-hungry man. That such a holocaust has been largely forgotten and written out of the history books says as much about the way we interpret and digest history as anything. I'll leave the final judgment to the readers, but even if you are not generally interested in history this book is fascinating and casts light into a chapter of history most seem to have forgotten.

The Big Book Launch!

It seems like whenever I need sleep the most is when I'm guaranteed to sleep the worst—today I wake up feeling like someone is drilling a hole into the center of my forehead, thinking okay, I have a book launch today, let's engage, let's engage. Sitting on the fire escape for my afternoon sun exposure, I have to face away from the sun and the view I usually live for—downtown San Francisco all the way to the bay if I face left, the San Bruno Mountains in the center, the trees of Buena Vista Park all the way to the right. Usually, sitting in the sun makes me happy, but today it just makes my body feel even more twisted and dried-out. When I sleep extra-terribly, I can't digest anything, and today is no exception—I'm just going back and forth from eating to shitting, doesn't feel that effective really.

I figure that today's the launch for *Nobody Passes*, so I'll turn on the news and listen through the lens of passing. Doesn't take long for them to start talking about bipartisan consensus—that's a passing crime if I've ever heard one. First thing they're talking about is Robert Gates, the Iran Contra war criminal on the path to becoming the next Secretary of Defense, and Senator Carl Levin, who is just so heroic because he actually supports withdrawal from Iraq—I mean, who would've thought of that—withdrawal from Iraq? What does this firebrand of the Democratic Party say about Robert Gates? He says: I think he has an open mind. That's great—a war criminal with an open mind. Mr. Gates, torture or death squads? Oh, I have an open mind.

Next thing I hear about is how Congress is debating a resolution condemning the French city of St. Denis for naming a street after Mumia Abu-Jamal. What an insult to our national security—the US must defend capital punishment at all costs—it's one of our greatest exports!

Then, a wetlands protection act that authorizes more drilling on the Gulf Coast—That'll protect the wetlands! And then we get to hear from San Francisco local Nancy Pelosi—did you realize she was a woman? A woman! A woman as the Speaker of the House—wow, the US is really ready for change. Anyway, Nancy Pelosi says that she doesn't support drilling on the wetlands, but she will not organize opposition. Now that's new leadership!

After that, I turn off the news and put on Nina Simone, but at least I've got some great material to add to my introduction. That's when I start to feel better—when I'm practicing my introduction, after I've taken digestive enzymes and my stomach sort of feels calmer. Grant comes over to help me get the books to the library, and then Katia arrives to drive us there. I'm stressing out about whether the sparkly purple belt is the right choice with the rest of my purple and pink outfit, but the curls in the front of my hair are exactly in place, so that makes me feel better.

At the library, I'm a sketchy mess, finding it hard to breathe with so much going on—it's intense how nervous I get before a launch—it's hard to focus on anything. Then I'm up there at the podium, talking about the news from the news, running

into Laura Albert (who invented the JT LeRoy Experience) while mailing a package, then on to deeper terrain with the visit to my father and that emotional space of simultaneously expressing everything while not pretending that *anything* was okay—it's that place of refusing to pass that I want to invoke with this book.

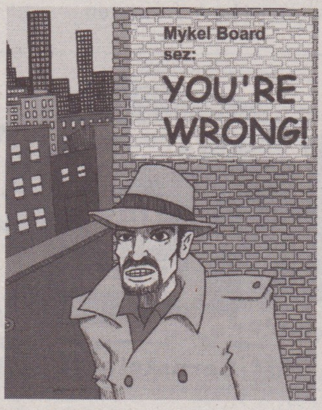
Then I'm talking about the book, how it arose from wanting to examine passing as a means through which the violence of assimilation takes place, and then I'm reciting a few of the subjects addressed within—that's a fun (and long!) list, and people applaud right when I get to the end, which makes it even more fun. Then I talk a little bit about all the drama with my editor at Seal, which I wrote about in an earlier column and then also the book intro. And, tada—a few anecdotes, and I'm ready to welcome the contributors!

It's so much fun to see people reading their work live, to see all of these complicated and surprising intersections between lived identities and struggles and stories. I also like watching the contributors watch each other. Since there are ten contributors reading at the launch, I've asked everyone to read one to two pages max, so that no one goes over five minutes (the library is really strict about time, and a security guard comes to kick us out around 7:45 p.m., just an hour-and-a-half after the event begins). Several times I get nervous that someone has forgotten the time limit, but actually everyone is on it. When the reading comes to a close, it's before 7:30 p.m., the time when I wanted the reading to end so that people could socialize and buy books and get their books signed. We even have time for a few questions, but the audience is silent. At this point, there are well over 100 people there (I'm counting). The seats go all the way from the front of the room to the far back. No one has any questions? Everyone's passing here, I joke—but the truth is probably that there is so much information that people are saturated with it, taking time to digest. There will be more time for questions at the City Lights reading in a few days—for now I'm appreciating this sensation.

I sell about 35 books—which is a ton—it's also the only reading when proceeds from sale of the books will go directly to funding my Nobody Passes book tour, so that's great. The library is such an ideal venue for a launch—the room is large, but comfortable and accessible—the only problem is that they close so early, people have to rush out instead of socializing. I've had my last three book launches here, but I always miss the fact that people can't stick around—there's so much energy and excitement. And there aren't many comfortable places nearby to go—Katia figures out a Middle Eastern place that turns out to be a great idea because it's wide open and comfortable and the eight of us who gather there can actually hear one another. The lentil soup is good, too—and they have this great homemade flat bread. I always like the social time right after a reading—it feels extra-intimate.

Back at home, I'm incredibly exhausted but in such a different way from the beginning of the day. I don't feel edgy anymore, just satisfied and excited about the book and its possibilities.

Check out the new book, *Nobody Passes: Rejecting the Rules of Gender and Conformity*, and tell me what you think! You can also check in on me at my new blog, http://nobodypasses.blogspot.com. The expanded second edition of *That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation*, originally scheduled for October 2006, has been delayed—I predict February 2007. I live for feedback, so send me love letters and/or delicious threats via <www.mattbernsteinsycamore.com>, which includes past *MRR* columns. Or write to PO Box 640047, San Francisco, CA 94164-0047.



"As scarce as truth is, the supply has always been in excess of demand." —Josh Billings.

War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength. —George Orwell's NEWSPEAK in 1984

"I am not going to put that thing in my mouth," she says. "It's just been up my ass."

"But it was *your* ass!" I whine. "It's your own body after all."

"No!" she says with a voice like a stomping foot. "Last time, you asked me to stick a carrot up your ass while you jerked off. Okay, I did it. You had a good time. Did I ask you to eat the carrot?"

"But the carrot wasn't attached to me!" I tell her.

"What's that got to do with it? It's still eating shit! Okay, wash it first," she says. "Then we'll talk."

"But it'll go soft if I wash it," I say. "Look! It's already drooping."

My little friend has stopped looking at the ceiling. It slowly droops to fix its gaze on the wall. First in the center. Then, where the wall meets the floor.

"Come on," I beg. "I've swallowed enough of your menstruation to transfuse the Iraqi army. Don't you think we can go tat for tit on this?"

SCENE SHIFT TO NEW JERSEY: It's the 19th annual Chinngis (you know him as Genghis) Qan (you know him a Khan) festival. Every year in New Brunswick, New Jersey the Mongolian American Community Association celebrates this holiday. Mongolian-Americans and visiting Mongols from all over the US attend. Me too.

Women dress in beautiful silk deels. People are friendly, happy to see the BIG NOSE crew is interested in their culture.

This year, it's a celebration of 800 years since the rule of Khan. To most of the world, Genghis is a cruel tyrant and marauder. To Mongols, he's a hero. (Can you name *two* famous Mongols?) He ran the largest empire in the history of the world. He not only conquered the land, but also set up structures of rule, taxation, and law.

You cannot maintain control of an area that size just based on cruelty. If everyone hates you, they can gang up and overthrow you. Before Khan there was chaos. After him, though there was fear, there was order.

I'm not here to defend Khan, or to praise him. I just want to let you know there's more to him than meets our history books, and he's like a God to the Mongols.

The featured speaker at this meeting is an Italian scholar, Nicola di Cosmo. A professor at Princeton, he's presenting a paper on the system of kings and how Khan changed it.

According to the professor, by the time Genghis was just a teen, he had already amassed a small kingdom. Around him was chaos. It was time to tame it. But the leader needed to be sure his inner circle was faithful. He had to count on them to rule for him—and not against him.

"Kill your favorite horse," the great-

Khan-to-be said to his trusted circle of followers. Most of the men took their trusty sabers and swish swish. Headless horses. Those who allowed their horses to live were swish swished by Genghis.

A great pile of horse and man heads lay in the center of town.

"Now," said the young ruler, "kill your wives."

Most of the men immediately lopped off the heads of their better halves. Those female upper body parts joined the head heap. A few more male heads—those who refused to comply—were added to the kaput capita.

"Now," said the ruler, "kill your fathers."

This time, there was a hundred percent compliance.

Satisfied, Genghis built his inner circle.

"This," says Dr. Cosmo, "shows the strength and bravery of young Chinngis. It was perfect politics in a time of chaos."

SCENE SHIFT TO MENTAL: I write this a couple weeks after the US mid-term elections. My fellow liberals walk on air. *We won! We won!* They shout.

I say, "Waddaya mean *we*, whiteman?

Maybe some people I voted for won. In New York, if you vote for a candidate on any party, they still get the vote. Say Latoya Schwartz runs as a Democrat and as a Dance-Your-Booty Party candidate. She earns 5005 votes as a Democrat and 302 votes as a DYB. Her total is 5307. That beats Albert Pennyweather's 5104 as a Republican-only candidate. This way, if I like Latoya, I'm not forced to vote Democratic to see her win.

Other states (Massachusetts, for example) don't have that system. They count each party as if it had a different candidate. That forces people into voting for decent guys in bad parties.

This year I voted straight Dance-Your-Booty. Maybe someone from that party won. I don't know.

But was I happy about the election? No!

William Safire, a *New York Times* columnist and intelligent conservative, explained it best. His column after the election said that this wasn't a radical victory. It wasn't even a liberal victory. It was a victory for moderation.

Hillary Clinton, an Iraqi war supporter, insurance company flak-girl, pro-censorship pusher, "let's work with the anti-abortionists," principle-less carpetbagger, starts her victory speech with God Bless America! Please tell me how that's different from what Laura Bush would say.

Joe Lieberman, the Republican's best Democrat, runs as an independent and beats the anti-war Democrat running against him. Elliot Spitzer, the anti-porn crusader wins as NY governor. In California, the same goes for middle-of-the-road muscleman Arnold Schwarzenegger.

The election was a contest between people with bad principles and those with no principles. The NO PRINCIPLES won.

It was not the Republicans who lost this election. It was ideals, vision, principles. And it disgusts me.

One exception was Charles Rangel, a colored Democrat from New York. He suggested starting the draft again. (I told you before the last Bush election, that it would be a Democrat, *not* a Republican who'd bring back the draft.)

I don't know his plan, but if it were mine, I'd say: EVERYBODY GOES—in reverse order of family income. Start with the Billionaires. Got big bucks in your family? Yeah! Pow! In the army. Front lines. See how many wars we get into after that. You'll see a fuck of a lot fewer invasions. That's my bet.

That Charles has balls. If he were representing *my* congressional district, he'd have my vote. I'd actually be happy if he won.

But is there anyone else? The anti-war people lost. Democrats, who ran on nothing more than *Republicans are fucking up*, have no plan on how *not* to fuck up.

Iraq? The solution is simple. It's just what the Republicans accuse the Democrats of saying... but the Democrats lack the balls to say:

"We fucked up. We shouldn't have gone in there in the first place. Sorry. We're leaving."

For *cut-and-run* Democrats, I don't see any cutting and running at all.

SCENE SHIFT to Oprah Winfrey. She's talking to a female schoolteacher who is *a registered sex offender.*

"Just like a pedophile," says Oprah.

Jezus fuckin' suckin' humpin' Christ!

The guy was 13. He had a crush on a cute young teacher. And he made it!! He followed through. Had balls. Did what every 13-year old wishes he could do.

"You ruined that boy's life," says Oprah.

What the fuck? The arrest. The trial. The love of his life vilified. *That* ruined his life. Getting laid? Come on!!

"I know," says the teacher sobbing. "That's why I came on this show. To warn others. To ask people to get help so the same thing doesn't happen to them."

I think I'm going to be sick.

SCENE SHIFT to NOW.

I sit in BurritoVille on Nassau Street downtown New York. I've just finished my pair of tacos.

[ASIDE: It's a cliché, but like most clichés, it's true. You cannot get good Mexican food in New York. New Yorkers are food wimps. Anything spicier than salt throws their delicate little tongues into a tizzy. Mexican food, Thai food, Indian food, it all sucks in New York. Korean food is decent. That's because Koreans make it for Koreans, not the mealy-mouthed locals who think Taco Bell is a bit too heavy on the pepper.]

Across from me are an older Chinese lady and a younger Hispanic woman. Maybe they're on the same jury. It *is* the court neighborhood. Me? I've just returned from opening an account with AmeriTrade stockbrokers. I decided to sell my 15 shares of Pfizer. I just can't scratch my balls in good conscience, knowing that I'm part owner of one of the most evil corporations in the world. Among the worst corporations in the world. It made number six, right after Phillip Morris and before Suez-Lyonnaise Des Eaux. The latter is a French company that privatizes water and sells it back to locals at a huge profit.

Pfizer is notorious for selling its AIDS drugs at more than most people (let alone *poor* people) can afford and actively going after anyone who tries to make the same drugs cheaply. For them, it's *us or die.*

Okay, they make Viagra, but they don't give it away free—even to stockholders. I'm unloading.

My economically sophisticated friends say I shouldn't.

"Leave your morals aside when you invest," they say. "You've got to use your money with your head, not your heart. When you make a bundle, give to the needy. But investing and morality just don't mix."

SCENE SHIFT to THE NETHERLANDS: Holland, that bastion of personal freedom. That land of marijuana coffee shops and homo weddings. That land of ladies in windows and 12-year old age of consent. That land has banned burqas.

You know, burqas, those long Muslim gowns. They only show the eyes. Women in Iran wear them. In Iraq, women will soon be wearing them again. Sadaam banned them...and now the Dutch are doing the same. No one cares. Could you imagine if they banned yarmulkes?

Are the burqas a problem? How many European terrorists were dressed in them, hiding ticking TNT under their tresses?

Er... none.

Well, are they a police problem? Thousands of burqa-wearing babes running pell mell through the streets, mugging at will, with victims unable to report what the perpetrators looked like? Er... nope. There have been *no* reports of burqa crimes. Fewer than 100 women wear the things in all of Holland. So what's it about?

Glad you asked me.

I've said that *Freedom of Religion* is the least important of American freedoms. If there were no religion in the world, it would be a so much better place. During the last dozen or more years, more people have died in religious wars than in any kind of national aggression.

If I could piss in a genie bottle and make religion disappear in a flash, I'd do it. But I can't. There's some basic human spiritual need that religion fulfills. The commies tried to wipe it out, and died trying. It won't happen. So we've got to deal with it.

But this Holland law goes beyond religion. Muslims are dark, have kinky hair, "a look." You can see it in the cooks at the *hallal* stands. You can see it in the owners of half the delis in L.A. We Jews consider ourselves a race as much as a religion. The world considers Muslims to be one.

It's racism. A. B. and C. That's it. Those nice liberal Dutch. Those blond haired, blue-eyed giants, stomping through tulips in their wooden shoes. Those models of good sense: are racist.

Like Israelis who say anyone can be a citizen, as long as she's a Jew (and her mom's a Jew). The Dutch are saying, anyone can wear what she wants... as long as it doesn't say Muslim.

Ah yeah, socialist Holland...or should I say National Socialist Holland.

FINAL SCENE SHIFT: It's rarer than a Democrat with principles. How many times have you said, "You can hold it while I pee?" How many times has she done it? Yowsah!

I lay naked in the bathtub. She's holding it straight up.

"Go!" she says. "Now's your chance. I said I would and I will, but I'm not waiting all night."

"But it's hard for me to do it if someone's watching," I whine, forcing hard, but releasing only a fart against the dry tub.

"I'll close my eyes," she says. "Then I won't be watching, I'll just be holding."

"Try it!" I tell her.

When her eyes close, I feel my own close. The urethral muscles relax. The warm liquid millimeters its way forward. Yes! Yes!

"Yes! Yes!" I yell. She opens her eyes and directs the spray right, left, over my body, my chest, my legs. The warmth spreads over me like a blanket over a baby.

I drip dry.

"That was disgusting," she says. "But you liked it! That means it's not the same as eating a shit-covered carrot. You still owe me."

The earth shakes. My blood turns cold. The roof cracks and allows God to shine down from her heaven. The girl's right. I've missed it.

I missed how people, because of their intractable beliefs, take the most obvious facts and twist them. When truth is so obvious, so direct, so true, you, me, the Dutch, and the Democrats go through contortions to avoid it.

How can we believe this stuff?

Pissing on yourself for fun is the same as eating shit you find disgusting. Chopping heads off is good politics. People with no principles are better than people with principles we don't like. Giving someone pleasure is bad. Banning someone's beliefs by banning their clothes is good. You should "forget your morality" when you enter the stock market... or anywhere else.

You've got an angle to avoid the most obvious truths. You've got some cover, some internal mechanism that disconnects the crap detector when it inconveniently smells of your own shit.

Sorry buckaroos. I'm here to rub your nose in it.

ENDNOTES: email subscribers (god@mykelboard.com) or website viewers (www.mykelboard.com) will get live links and a chance to comment on the column

Who's got the family values department: So, the fundies want to have *"faith-based"* instructions about family values. Well, not so fast buster.

George Barna, an evangelical pollster reports that, "born-again Christians are more likely than others to experience a divorce. That pattern has been in place for quite some time...and challenges the idea that churches provide truly practical and life-changing support for marriages."

Other research shows that Bible Belt states have higher divorce rates that Northeastern "liberal" states. Actually, the Northeast has the *lowest* divorce rate in the country.

Are hate-crimes a two-way street? dept: The *Associated Press* reports that a Manhattan court arraigned seven women, all from New Jersey. The charges? First-degree assault and first-degree gang assault. One member was accused of stabbing a man with a steak knife.

The victim, Dwayne Buckle, said he was standing outside a movie theater when he saw the women walking by. He said "Hi," and one of the women spat in his face. He spat back. Then they started hitting him and one of them stabbed him in the abdomen. He said the women were lesbians and the incident was "a hate crime against a straight man." We'll see what happens with that one.

Are your genes too tight? dept: Allerca Inc, a San Diego company, has genetically engineered cats not to produce the protein responsible for allergies. Since the cats are new, there's no telling what else this genetic manipulation might cause. Can you say CAT PEOPLE? Werecats? Hmmm, I think I'd rather sneeze. Especially since the price tag for one of these monsters is $3950... but for you...

We won dept: Remember I was talking about the South Dakota abortion referendum? Jerry Falwell said it was an important test for the whole nation. Well, we won that one! The ban was repealed. Congrats! But I still haven't received a postcard from Sioux Falls.

On the other hand dept: Besides the twin tragedies of Hillary Clinton and Joe Lieberman, eleven states voted to prohibit gay marriage. While I'm against gay (and straight) marriage, I think it's a bad idea to officially prohibit it. I could be convinced, however. Next year, I'd like to see those same states vote on measures to prohibit *straight* marriage. If they pass, I'll move there.

We're number one...er...two...er...three...er...four...er...dept: The United Nations released its report on the best countries in the world to live in. Number one, for the sixth year in a row was Norway. Next was Iceland, followed by Australia, Ireland, Sweden, Canada, Japan, and then at number eight the US. Frankly, I'm surprise we scored so high. Denmark? France? Germany? Where are they? People in those countries can see a doctor when they get sick. They can read when they finish high school. They can drink before their hair turns gray. They've got to rank somewhere higher than this big lump of dirt.

And what about that Chinese mp3 player you bought last week? dept: At the Chinngis Qan ceremony I learned that the current politically correct term for *Inner Mongolia* is *Southern Mongolia.* Who knew?

I also learned that the country, still under Chinese occupation, is even more

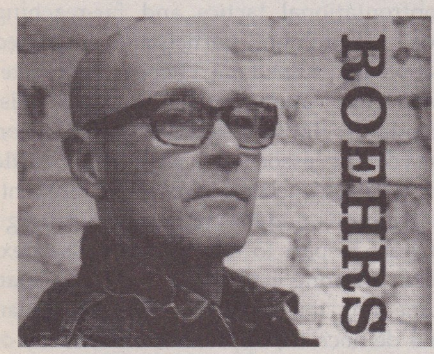
repressed than Tibet. At least, Tibet has the PR and the Beastie Boys to make folks sit up and take notice. Inner... er... Southern Mongolia has only me. And...

The *Southern Mongolia Human Rights Information Center. Check out their website* (www.smhric.org). It'll give you some idea about what's going on.

One for the Monster Dept: CNN did a special report on Energy Drinks. Probably a prelude to liberal calls for the banning of such drinks... or setting an age limit. I've been championing MONSTER over ROCK STAR for several months.

Here's what the network's energy drink expert said: *Monster is more of a hard rocker, maybe with a little punk thrown in, much more hardcore. Rockstar (distributed by Coca Cola) is the more mainstream, glam rock band that's more about partying then playing.*

I especially like that *"punk thrown in"* part.



Blood, Guts, Going Nuts

Hey you goddamn cretins! Thrashbastard Records from Berlin, Germany has three excellent new seven inches out now. These great records will be the new soundtrack to regale drunken punk rockers around the globe.

Thrashbastard #5 is DICK CHENEY with their *Pa Mitt Rum 7"*. This is a fucking thrash masterpiece! These crazed Swedish punkers come out swinging and proceed to destroy the small semblance of sanity you had left! DICK CHENEY has current and/or former members of THE VICIOUS, INSURGENT KID, REIGN OF BOMBS, and THE RATS. The *Pa Mitt Rum* EP on Thrashbastard is released in conjunction with Sell Our Souls Records, from Barcelona, Spain. This EP is packed with top-notch punk songs. Every song on this little fucker is fast and furious with slashing vocals and boiling guitar rhythms! Fucking great!

Thrashbastard #6 presents THE RATS, Umea, Sweden's fine young hardcore band. These inspired punks unleash eight rough and ready punk anthems that demonstrate a firm rock-and-roll foundation. The record kicks off with "We Are The Rats" and slams right into "Not Afraid to Die." THE RATS flesh out their punk sound with an unmistakable streak of old school street rock. THE RATS chug through "I Don't Know," "TMMFA," and get to the instant thrash classic, "Do You Really Want to Fight Me?" Great!

Next up is "Dance of the Dying", which will kick you right in the brain! THE RATS finish up this thrash opus with a fucking strong number—"Keep Away." Fuck yes!

The third seven inch crusher out this month on Thrash Bastard is a split EP featuring the aforementioned RATS and East Germany's SHUT THE FUCK UP. SHUT THE FUCK UP initiates the punk proceedings with a noisy hardcore song, "What the Fuck (Is Wrong With You)?" The guitars cluster menacingly all around the vocals, giving the music a desperate edge. Song two, "Tear Me Apart," continues the thrashy mayhem. Song number three begins with a melodic introduction in a hardcore blitzkrieg! Song four is "Get Outta Here." This frantic thrash fest finishes up with a burst of testosterone and pissed-off venting! Punk as fuck! The SHUT THE FUCK UP side prepares you for the punk rock hammer! THE RATS represent Umeå proudly! For a young band, these guys have a confident grip on the rock 'n' roll beast!

THE RATS get the ball rolling with "Share or Die." This thrashy tune suggests that individuals learn to co-exist in the city rather than burning and pillaging. Next up, from THE RATS, is "Parking Lot Justice," moving this manic punk rock up to the next level! THE RATS complete the beating you have sustained so far with "Out of Control." This is good punk rock! For the triumvirate of fine Thrashbastard Records, contact Andreas Knoblock, Warschauer Str. 57, 10243 Berlin, Germany, thrashbastard@yahoo.de.

Fucking A!!! Storming into your living room straight from the Northeast comes FOR THE WORSE, with their caustic new CD *Blood, Guts, Going Nuts*. In 2004, Bridge Nine Records from Boston, Massachusetts, USA bludgeoned you with *The Chaos Continues* CD, which clearly demonstrates the brute hardcore strength of these men. On the new *Blood, Guts, Going Nuts* CD. FOR THE WORSE up the ante with a powerful hardcore rant secured by a solid rock 'n' roll foundation. The frenzied vocals of Mr. McCarthy will fucking rip your ears off! Mr.'s Dibendetto and Lee scorch the fucking earth with their guitar assault! Mr. Ryan Bachiguelpo, on bass, teamed up with Mr. Brian Scott, on drums, blast a crater in your skull while keeping the thrash behemoth surging faster, always forward!

FOR THE WORSE cuts to the quick with lyrics that are relevant to society's ills today. "Hear Nothing, See Nothing, Speak Nothing" illustrates how some of the people today are sleepwalking through life, procrastinating and accomplishing nothing. The youth are exhorted to "Get out of bed and get off the couch / Open your eyes and take it all in / Welcome to this world of shit!" Fuck! That's a bleak wake-up call!

In "The Blame Game," the band speaks of the tendency of certain groups in our society to blame rock 'n' roll or video games or other scapegoats for the problems in our culture. FOR THE WORSE chastises the whiners: "Blaming anyone but yourselves / (Take) no responsibility." And add "If the government controls everything we hear and see / Do we really have the freedom of speech?" Well put!

Song number fourteen is a fucking seething with ridicule, behind a fucking strong hardcore momentum, pushes this shit right over the top!! The lyrics belittle the wisdom of praying, wishing on stars, clutching rosaries or asking Jesus for help.

Every song on the FOR THE WORSE *Blood, Guts, Going Nuts* CD is fucking raging with anger! On "Don't Waste Our Time", the men warn, "Give us everything you have inside- your blood, your guts, your sweat—your mind. Don't bore us to death!!" Yes! You better think twice if your wimpy band is going to play before these guys!

For a grand finale, FOR THE WORSE gives you a respectful cover of "This is Boston, Not LA," originally by THE FREEZE.

For the new CD by FOR THE WORSE, or 2004's *The Chaos Continues*, contact Bridge Nine Records at www.bridge9.com or for merchandise to go www.b9 store.com. CDs of special interest in the current Bridge Nine catalog are: NO TURNING BACK, "Holding On" and DEATH BEFORE DISHOHOR, "Friends Family Forever", Two brand new CDs on Bridge Nine that will rock your socks off are "Singles Collection One" featuring TRUST, PROCLAMATION, TENFOLD, and SUM OF ALL FEARS, and "Singles Collection Two" with R'N' R, DEATH THREAT, OUTBREAK, SOME KIND OF HATE and more!! Dollar for dollar these compilations are the best deal in town!!

Good news for you rock and roll fucks!

The San Francisco Bay Area has a fucking over-the-top rock outfit blistering the airwaves at the local dives. THE WHITE BARONS are a rock and roll super-group for the little cow town we call San Francisco. The band is comprised of Eva Von Slut of THEE MERRY WIDOWS, Nate and Johnny of THE WHISKEY DICK DARRYLS, and Adam from TIME IN MALTA and ALL BETS OFF. As soon as you put the tone arm down on "Wicked Ways," THE WHITE BARONS take control of your drug-addled brain! This is high-octane rock—kind of like THE DEAD BOYS on a three-day methamphetamine binge! This shit grabs you by the scruff of the neck and drags you into the pit! Rock and roll this potent begs for vast quantities of drugs and alcohol! Don't even attempt to match the prodigious amounts of toxins these crazed individuals consume! This "Wicked Ways" rock 'n' roll powerhouse 45 by THE WHITE BARONS is released, appropriately enough, on the Champagne and Cocaine Record Label.

The flipside of this split 45 is inhabited by the infamous ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN from New Jersey. ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN has made some decent rock 'n' roll records over the last fifteen years, but this live cut—"Sweet Baby Arrogance",s recorded November 2nd, 2002 at the Red Rooster in Alameda, California doesn't catch them at the top of their game. No matter. This record is worth acquiring on the strength of "Wicked Ways" by THE WHITE BARONS. Get this record while it's hot! Go see THE WHITE BARONS when they come to your town!!! Contact these bad humans at www.myspace.com/whitebarons or evilisasevildoes13@yahoo.com, or at 415-378-6185.

To bring the punk rock readership up to date, lets talk about that consistently great label from Richmond, Virginia, Grave Mistake Records. Some of you hardcore knuckleheads didn't get a chance to listen to the excellent CLOAK DAGGER EP from several months back. CLOAK DAGGER plays a frantic, jangy off-kilter kind of punk rock with a singer who sounds as if he is on the brink of a psychotic episode. CLOAK DAGGER starts the punk rock with "Daggers" on side A. These guys are not comfortable with this world! They are desperate! Song two on side A is "Paranoid." The uneasy feeling you get from "Daggers" seeps right into "Paranoid." The troubled men who play in CLOAK DAGGER have an axe to grind. Perhaps there are some "issues" that are not resolved.

Flip this record over and start with the song "Electrocution." You are still feeling uncomfortable, right? CLOAK DAGGER has done their job! The last song, "Shady Grave" continues to work on your insecurities. It's as if you let THE STITCHES (LA) crash at your house and they didn't bring their medication. Trouble with a capital T!! CLOAK DAGGER is snotty punk with possessed guitar playing and urgent singing—buyer beware! This is dangerous shit! Not for the uninitiated! For CLOAK DAGGER product, contact Grave Mistake Records at PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241. Next month on Grave Mistake: DEEP SLEEP.

Until next month, see you at the bar!

CrimethInc. Workers' Collective Bullet-in

Greetings and other appropriate gestures, fellow *MRR* readers! This issue we look back on the Seattle WTO protests of 1999, a watershed moment in the recent history of North American anarchism and resistance. For a comprehensive account of what happened in Seattle, write us (at The People's Republications of CrimethInc., PO Box 2133, Greensboro, NC 27402) and demand a copy of the pamphlet *The Seattle WTO Protests: A Memoir and Analysis, with an Eye to the Future,* or go to www.crimethinc.com.

Looking Back from November 30, 2006

From this vantage point, seven years to the day afterwards, it is possible to interpret the WTO protests according to any number of frameworks. They were a watershed in the development of the contemporary anticapitalist movement, at which time thousands of disparate groups discovered each other and the power they could wield together. They were the point at which, a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the old "democracy versus communism" opposition, the fundamental dichotomy of global politics was recast as corporate capitalism versus the common people. They were, as the researchers of the RAND corporation self-servingly discovered, the substantiation of theories about how new communications technologies would shape social conflict. They were simultaneously the beginning and the high point of a "movement of movements" which ended when terrorists hijacked the global stage on September 11th, or when communist splinter groups hijacked the anti-war movement a year and a half later, or which continues so long as certain anthropology professors require a subject for inquiry.

The only thing that matters for us, of course, is what we can learn from the past to act effectively in the present. Does it make sense to pursue "another Seattle," or is that just a will-o'-the-wisp? Could any of the tactics that succeeded in Seattle be as effective today, or are they subject to a law of diminishing returns?

What Happened in Seattle

Immediately following the Seattle WTO protests, some reformists moaned that the confrontational tactics and far-reaching goals of militant participants alienated people and ruined any chance of concretely affecting national policy. Yet by reformist standards, the so-called anti-globalization movement associated with the Seattle protests achieved practically unprecedented triumphs, and the credit for this must go at least in part to the militants. The next WTO meeting had to be held in Qatar, cementing the image of the WTO as an anti-democratic, oppressive elite. Many of the proposals that had most outraged activists were immediately dropped; likewise, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) agreement is now essentially dead in the water. Some analysts have concluded that the mobilization against corporate globalization peaked early because its goals were not ambitious *enough.*

In addition to giving the WTO a public image makeover and successfully forcing concessions from it, the militancy of the demonstrators in Seattle pushed its supposed critics to adopt a more uncompromising stance. Organized labor and segments of the Democratic Party have to present the illusion of being oppositional in order to justify their existence. As was frankly acknowledged in the RAND report, they hoped to maintain this illusion and simultaneously absorb and neutralize any radical tendencies by putting in an appearance at the Seattle WTO protests. Once they found themselves caught up in a huge, obviously popular demonstration against the WTO, they had to feign at least some sympathy or else reveal their "opposition" to be a mere pretense. Thus we can see that direct action is the most effective

means both for putting pressure on adversaries and for exerting leverage on supposed allies. Even if you don't want to overthrow the government, forget about voting and petitioning—the only hope for change is in the streets.

Finally, the successes in Seattle brought US anarchists worldwide visibility, along with a needed morale boost, and provided a format for future actions. The "summit-hopping" model made a virtue of the transience that has been such a stumbling block for anticapitalist organizing in North America; like it or not, a movement must make the best of its weaknesses, and if many anarchists couldn't be counted on to stay in one place long enough to do effective local organizing, at least that mobility enabled them to come together occasionally at capitalist summits.

The breakthroughs in Seattle that affected the anarchist community turned out in the long run to be dangerous gifts: as soon as the media attention, the thrill of victory, and the effectiveness of the new model were taken away, many anarchists felt they were back at square one.

A Complex Legacy

In reflecting on the mobilization in Seattle, people often overlook the years of failure that had preceded it. What happened in Seattle was possible precisely because it had been years, if not decades, since so many people joined in disruptive action against a capitalist institution in the US. As noted in the RAND analysis, police expected symbolic arrests à la the antinuclear demonstrations of the 1980s, not the coordinated obstruction and rioting they got. Subsequent mass actions were much more difficult to pull off, as the authorities mobilized every resource to ensure that what happened in Seattle would not happen again.

Despite this, Seattle was followed by a series of demonstrations unlike anything in the preceding decade: Washington, DC was shut down the following April by protests against the International Monetary Fund, and a year later the FTAA ministerial in Quebec City occasioned the most intense street fighting since the Los Angeles riots of 1992. All the teargas in the country was no match for the enthusiasm of the anticapitalist movement once people had a model to work from and a structure to plug into. It was not until after September 11, 2001 that the tide finally began to recede, and this occurred primarily as a result of the widespread self-fulfilling prophecy that the high point of anticapitalist mass actions was over. The momentum that followed Seattle was not destroyed by the government response, it was abandoned by those who had maintained it: the most significant question presented by the post-Seattle phase of struggle is not how to handle repression, but how to sustain morale.

After anticapitalists lost the initiative, it was inevitable that the partisans of willful impotence would regain it. Proportionate to the number of participants, the antiwar movement of 2002 to 2003 was incredibly ineffectual, largely due to the machinations of liberals and communists who did their best to prevent anyone from taking effective action. And once the legend of Seattle ceased to be the origin myth of an existing, vibrant movement, it became a burden upon everyone who tried to apply the mass action model. Even though many anarchist demonstrations between 2002 and 2005 put everything that happened in the mid-1990s to shame, they seemed stunted and disappointing compared with the Battle of Seattle. Past accomplishments always cast a shadow over the present, and shadows loom bigger the further the object casting them recedes.

The FTAA ministerial in Miami four years after the Seattle WTO protests showed how much ground anticapitalists had lost and how much their adversaries—both those in uniform and those carrying protest signs—had learned. While there were probably almost as many committed anarchists in Miami as there were in Seattle, far fewer other protesters showed up—partly because Miami is so far from the rest of the US, partly because it has the most reactionary Latino population of any US city, and partly because the ability of anticapitalist networks to bring out protesters had been sapped by demoralization and competition with antiwar organizing. The AFL-CIO duplicitously coordinated with the police while asking demonstrators not to carry out direct action during their march, and the demonstrators—insanely—agreed to this request. This enabled the police to concentrate on beating and pepper-spraying people before the union march, controlling the streets during it, and then viciously brutalizing and arresting everyone who remained in town after it. The police tactics in Miami, which were significantly more aggressive than those of the police in Seattle, showed that the fluke in Seattle was not that the police were so aggressive but that the corporate media were caught off guard and accidentally reported on their violence. Finally, the strategy of the demonstrators in Miami, which consisted of a largely symbolic assault on the fence surrounding the meetings, had no hope of actually interfering with them. The protests in Miami only succeeded in disrupting business as usual and giving the FTAA a bad name because the authorities, still transfixed by the specter of Seattle, went to such lengths to repress them.

As of this writing, the Miami FTAA ministerial is itself three years behind us, and there have been no major mass actions in the US since Bush's second inauguration almost two years ago. Paradoxically, the good news is that enough time may now have elapsed since the WTO protests that a mass mobilization with a clever strategy could catch the powers that be by surprise again—but the bad news is that anarchists, demoralized from so many years of trying to "repeat Seattle," may not yet be ready to stake everything on another attempt.

What Next?

The presidential campaign of 2008 will be the next backdrop against which major mass actions can be expected to take place. Whatever misgivings some of us currently have about them, for anarchists not to have a powerful presence in mass actions in 2008 would be tantamount to our disappearance from the national arena of social struggle.

The essential challenge of the mass action model is that its greatest strengths and weaknesses are identical. Working from the physics equation *tension=force/area*, this model brings together a great number of people in a small space so their coordinated actions can have exponential effects—but with sufficient warning, the state can also concentrate its forces to neutralize their efforts. Consequently, successful mass actions must either come as a surprise themselves or employ an unexpected strategy. At the G8 protests in Scotland in 2005, for example, participants outwitted the authorities by dispersing into the countryside to block roads outside the areas where police forces were concentrated.

Effective mass action necessitates that people from a broad range of perspectives work together without limiting each other. In that regard, mass actions are good practice for building the symbiotic relationships fundamental to an anarchist society. The mobilizations that succeeded in Seattle, Quebec City, and elsewhere succeeded because a great number of people simultaneously engaged in a diverse array of complementary tactics. Regardless of the

success of a particular action, the ability to do this itself constitutes a victory over the segregation, isolation, and conflict promoted by the capitalist system. In that regard, the Seattle WTO protests were not an unrepeatable miracle, but rather an example of how powerful we can be whenever we find ways to work together.

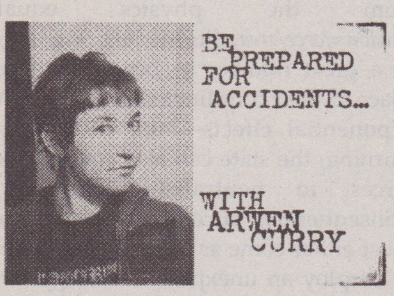
Suggested Reading

We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism—Through testimony, photos, tactics, and history, this book provides an excellent context for anticapitalist organizing in the years up to and immediately following the WTO protests.

"Five Years After WTO Protests" by Chuck Munson—In this article, one of the administrators of www.infoshop.org refutes corporate media reports that the movement behind the WTO protests had come to an end by 2004.

N30 Black Bloc Communiqué by the Acme Collective—Some of the participants in the Black Bloc in Seattle released this excellent and nuanced defense of anarchist property destruction at the WTO demonstrations immediately afterwards.

"Demonstrating Resistance," the feature article in the first issue of *Rolling Thunder*—This extensive analysis follows the anarchist experimentation with mass action and autonomous action models that occurred between 2000 and 2005, drawing conclusions about what factors must be present for each approach to succeed.



In the opening lines of his novel *The Chaneysville Incident,* David Bradley broke down the question of class—and race—in America through descriptions of what it means to travel by bus, train, and air. It was a useful analogy, but is beginning to break down around the edges recently, if my recent trip to Phoenix is any indication.

We were late for the plane at the Oakland airport. We ran for the gate, me seething with indignity of running in public, with bags. The flight would leave in fifteen minutes. Would they let us on? Was it Nick's fault, for being late to meet our ride, or my fault, for forgetting to put my lipstick in the little plastic bag?

At the gate everyone moved around languidly, as if through oil. Had the flight already been sealed up, and people collecting for the next one. No, whew: it still said Phoenix on the sign.

"Is the flight delayed?" I asked.

"No," said the attendant, with a tone that made this seem like a strange, almost eccentric question.

"Fuck," said Nick, who was catching his breath and whose self-censorship is low. The attendant looked embarrassed.

"So, if the flight isn't late, will it leave in ten minutes? When will it start boarding?"

A cartoonish shrug. Half an hour later, we were in our seats. A few minutes after everyone settled in the commuter plane, the flight attendant made an announcement—not to acknowledge our now undeniable lateness, but to ask if anyone wouldn't mind moving from the front to the rear of the plane, to correct a "weight imbalance." As the three volunteers rose and came down the aisle to join us in the rear of the plane, cheers all around greeted them. Then the attendant then said—no loudspeaker, just yelling—that they'd be getting two free drinks each, on the house. More cheers, hoots, hollers. Nick and I looked into each other's eyes and read the deep desire not to be forced to party.

"It's the new Greyhound," he whispered. Sure enough, there were grunts all around us, and, I think, sobs. There were the usual thick-necked, wedding-ring-wearing businessmen in smug, fleshy packs. In the rear of the plane, drunken passengers ordered more vodka tonics by yelling "I love you!" to the flight attendant, who like many stewardesses these days was weary and blurred around the edges, not sharp and unnaturally powdered as they once were. Now, you can see how they might have boyfriends, children, hangovers.

The indiscretion was contagious. Infants shrieked and young children whined in harmony from all corners of the plane. Nick joined in the fray, asking in a theatrically loud voice if the main character in a story I was telling was "that guy who was so present in bed."

In Phoenix, or just outside Phoenix, where practically everyone gets their own cul-de-sac, you can't see the ground at all. What isn't paved is landscaped, shoveled in on top of the asphalt in little boxes decorated with native drought-resistant plants. You can see the mountains in the distance, and even though they look grey, they look inviting—surely there are squirrels and cactuses and fire ants there. If you have a business, it sits in a strip mall with a sign that is parallel in shape and size to other signs, forcing our desires for manicures and records and tax attorneys and toys and tattoos and therapy into a strangely parallel construction. It's stifling. The people seeking work and solace and entertainment drive around among the decorative plants, parking occasionally to walk in and out of the doorways. It's not that people here are consuming more, or even more thoughtlessly, than in coastal cities. Not at all. It's that with an environment like this, there's no room to breathe. You can't see the stars at night, and there's no city lights to replace them, and no pulse of people in the streets to help your heart beat in time. And nothing seems any older than anything else, so that you have the sense of stepping outside your house into someone else's tacky living room, where nothing can be touched or altered or broken down and rebuilt differently. It's not your world. You don't get to change it.

On the way back home, the beer-bellied security guy, settled, with the edgy assurance of a small-town cop, on a stool at the gate, checking IDs.

Apparently, as some civil libertarian computer programmer from Iowa or somewhere recently pointed out in an NPR interview, you don't really have to show your ID at airports. They'll let you through without it. As he noted, suicide bombers are not repeat offenders, and checking their IDs on the way on the plane is hardly any safeguard. And what gives them the right to know our comings and goings?

If you try to fly without your ID, you may even get called to the beginning of a long line, though of course you'll be searched. This is easier to pull off if you tell them you lost your wallet, rather than admitting to an objection on principle. We don't really know what the law about identification on planes is, however, because they won't release it to the public on national security grounds.

"Step right up, buddy," said the security guy to Nick. We stepped up.

"Boy, those were the days," he said, looking at Nick's ID.

"What days were those?" asked the security guy one booth over.

"Yes, what days were those?" I asked. Nick pushed me ahead, where I got pulled out for a bag check for forgetting, again, to take all of the tiny liquids and gels from one little bag and put them in another little bag. Nick reprimanded me. What was the point? I don't want it to be normal, that we

absorb all the arbitrary regulations they care to throw at us, without question or comment. Without having access to the text of laws that pertain to our own freedom of movement. Let them paw through my cosmetics, occasionally, and feel a little ripple of resentment.

The trip back was more subdued than our flight in, feeling more like flying used to feel. Still, air travel increasingly shows people in their shabby clothes and sloppy attitudes. Airports, where we hunt unconsciously for the real America in all these comings and goings, may be showing us more as we are than it ever used to. Perhaps, as housing developments and strip malls crush our spirits with their stucco uniformity, people are less and less inclined to dress up for airports, in-between places where if you don't mind being searched, you might even shoot for anonymity.

Arwen, PO Box 170291, SF, CA 94117, arwen@maximumrocknroll.com

For X-Mas weekend, my dear friend Courtney and I caught a ride with Paul and Ariel down to the Southern California suburbs, where my aunt, uncle, grandmother, and the ghosts (and walking corpses) of all those old HB strutters live. I'm not much for the holidays, but my cousin Gelareh—who moved to Brooklyn this past summer—was also going to be in town, and my aunt and uncle like to party (last Christmas, the cops had to bust up their party of loud, drunk Iranians, who incidentally couldn't have cared less about the birth of Christ but were enjoying their cocktails *very much*), so it seemed like a good time to travel somewhere a bit warmer than San Francisco and hang out in some unfamiliar places with my most familiar loved ones.

After fulfilling my familial obligations on the second day we were there—which included hanging out with Courtney, Gelareh, and my aunt at my grandmother's nursing home while she told us from the comfort of her bed all of the different ways to say "whore" in Farsi (I know, what? Thanks grandma…), we decided—we being Gelareh and I—that we should check out a Latina drag show at a bar a few blocks from home that a friend had told Gel about.

"It will be kitschy and possibly amazing," I said, imagining the kind of over-the-top performances that the whitewashed suburbs can bring out of people.

"It will be better than going to another mall," Courtney agreed, "I already feel like the OC is making me act crazy."

So it was decided, and at ten or so, we picked up Gel's friend Katy and made our way to the bar, which Martin informed me upon my return to SF—much to my shock and horror—is a national chain. A cross-country chain "gay-themed" bar? WTF?! The place was expansive, but we made our way to the seating area and ordered drinks, trying to psych ourselves into being there at all, surrounded by of isolated, sketchy, closeted husbands out for a secret night on the town and big-haired, shrieking fag hags talking a little too loudly and spilling their drinks on their skinny, smiling boy-friends-not-boyfriends.

"This place is weird," Courtney noted.

"Yeah, I don't think we're in San Francisco anymore," I replied, taking a sip of my bourbon, eyebrows raised and eyes a-glance.

An hour or so after our arrival—and a few painfully overpriced drinks later, the product of having such a happily professional clientele, I assume—the show began. Hostess Cha-Cha made some to-be-expected jokes, and engaged in some stylish, clever shit talk with a couple of the funnier patrons (*Cha-Cha:* "I missed my flight to Paris to be here with you tonight" *Bar-goer:* "Don't lie, you were going to Mexico, bitch.") So far, so good…

The show itself was sort pretty bootleg as far as drag shows go—a sad little Madonna impersonator who Courtney caught crying in the girls' room minutes before her performance, an intense and beautiful industrial darkwave queen named Serenity, and of course Cha-Cha herself, whose jokes only got worse instead of better the more I drank.

Then, something unexpected happened. We were sort of bored, my friends and I, having discussed most of what was happening in our respective lives, out of money to drink any more, and only barely interested in what was going on in front of us. Cha-Cha was halfway through with another bit in her now tired routine, when she blindsided us.

"I'd like to take this time to ask that we offer a moment of silence for our troops who are bravely defending our country and values in Iraq," Cha-Cha said.

She was met with a split second of silence, which I assume was out of stunned disbelief rather than a desire on the part of a bunch of celebratory queens to honor a cruel and unjust war, and then she was heckled by a couple of irate, drunken patrons, clearly disturbed by the sudden turn of events.

"Shut up, bitches," Cha-cha responded. "We are taking a moment for our country and for our troops."

WTF?! multiplied in my brain, and awkward silence—with her words *country and values, values and country* resonating in my head—resumed in the bar. A few seconds passed, and the show continued more or less as if nothing had happened. And then there was me, sitting with my sad little drink, ice hopelessly melted and whiskey hideously discolored, wondering if there was anywhere I could go not to be confronted with the maybe-I-should-just-get-married-and-support-the-war-effort-and-buy-a-house-and-have-a-kid-and-hate-blacks-and-join-my-neighborhood-watch mentality of bourgeois America. I mean, here I was in a gay bar, and a *MEXICAN DRAG QUEEN* was telling me to support the troops. I was too disturbed to even enjoy the bizarre irony of the situation.

This is the sort of shit that scares me, like when I hear queers talk about the "right" to marry or join the military, or when I hear punks and ex-punks talk about signing to corporate labels as strategy to spread their message. On the other side of the same gilded coin, I get the same feeling when I see women's fashion magazines selling "riot grrl" fashion for hundreds of dollars an outfit, when newly transplanted white trust fund hipsters in Brooklyn wear "Defend Brooklyn" T-shirts, or when I see trendy boutiques selling punk chic, ghetto chic, artist chic, or *anything* they can get their hands on to sell, sell, *sell* to all of the desperate consumers out there, eager to open their wallets for whatever can help them feel a little more connected and a little less square. Frankly, it's the same feeling I get when I see the phrase "USDA organic," whenever a politician emotes, whenever a queer goes straight, whenever I hear about plastic surgery to make people look more white, or when Bill Clinton plays the fucking saxophone.

Why are we so eager to hand them every bit of ourselves just so they can suck the life out of it, package it all up, and then sell it back to us at ten times the cost? They are trying to take what isn't theirs anyway, and

here we are like sad little dogs, biting and clawing at each other just to offer to those who would destroy us a targeted, point-black view of our hearts.

What I'm saying is that for us there can be no such thing as if-you-can't-beat-'em-join-'em, because if we can't beat them then *we all die*, either literally or metaphorically, living only to suffer and pay the consequences of their brutal authority. Or, to paraphrase Crass—pro-war queers–collaborators…pro-war queers, are they traitors? Well…of course they fucking are.

Sound dire? It is. I dare you to show me one example of assimilation not meaning cultural if not literal suicide. And I'm not talking lonely, isolated suicide either, I'm talking I'm-going-down-and-I'm-taking-you-all-with-me suicide, the kind where you're not only selling yourself out but all of the people around you. Fuck that. Whether they pay you for it or they just rip it out of your heaving, barely breathing chest, they are after your soul, and when they get it they will cut it up into a million easily packaged pieces and sell it right back to you. And that's if you're lucky, because the unlucky ones pay with their lives, shipped off to serve as target practice in corrupt, diseased wars, or die on the streets that birthed them, victims to the drug addiction, poverty, hunger, or insufferable depression.

Anyway, back to poor Cha-Cha and her sad little drag show. Maybe her little spiel was something she was contractually obligated to do, a victim to suburban watchdog vigilantism. Who knows. I mean, the world is pretty fucked and we've all compromised in the name of self-preservation. The show ended not long after that last bit, and my friends and I gulped down our drinks and got the hell out of there. Not until we reached home did we sigh from relief and laugh about the ridiculous shit we had just heard. We'd made it out of there, and even if we have to keep fighting, yeah, we were gonna be alright…

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Uh, right. Some magazine stuff before I sign off. First of all, three long-time shit-workers handed in their keys to the compound recently and have gone on to greener pastures, so I'd like to take this space to thank them for all of their years of dedication and hard work. There is Harald Hartmann, who has written zine reviews for too many years to count and who at one point even came close to assuming the coveted mantle of coordinator of the zine. Who is going to read and review all of those German and French zines now? (Maybe you, reader…?) And then there are record reviewers and all around beloved shit-workers Ryan Wells and Jeff Heermann, the smirking, raised-eyebrow elite of this fanzine, whose reviews everyone will miss but who I will miss in particular for their presence around the kitchen table, gossiping about punk records, Tim Yo's ghost, my love life, and whatever else that falls within the range of their expansive humor and wit. Between the two of them, Jeff and Ryan have reviewed hundreds and hundreds (thousands?) of punk records for *MRR*, probably breaking a few bands' hearts along the way but making our magazine all the richer for it. So yeah, thanks guys. See you 'round.

There is also other late-breaking but critical news in independent magazine and fanzine land: the Independent Press Association, our newsstand distributor and long-time non-profit supporter of independent media has ceased operations, effective immediately. We literally got the news only hours ago, so the magnitude of the situation has yet to fully sink in. In the last year and a half, we've had a relentless series of problems with the IPA, not the least of which was their continued non-payment of money they owed us (a large chunk of which we will likely never see) and non-communication about what was happening to them financially, but despite the recent souring of our relationship, I am ultimately sad to hear of their demise. After all, their stated mission was to support non-corporate media in this country at a time when hungry readers so sorely need more access to information. I'm sure we'll have more to say about the aftermath of the IPA's announcement in coming months, and what it means for *MRR*. Suffice it to say, what I can say now is this is a very dark time in the United States for independent press—a number magazines have gone under, even more have lost adequate means to distribution, and the political reality in the country means that things are not likely to get much better soon. Luckily, we here at *Maximum Rocknroll* are the punks and are pretty resilient, so you will continue to see us every month on the shelves and in your ink-tinged hands, but I'd like to urge everyone out there to do everything in their power continue to support those working hard at every level to get records, zines, magazines, art, writing, etc. to you in an independent manner.

***

(Soundtrack for this issue: X – *More Fun in the New World*, Nightmare – *Give Notice of Nightmare*, Jay Reatard – *Blood Visions*, The Ex – *Dignity of Labor*, Totalitär – new EP (!!!), Jump off a Building – demo, The Nerves – *Hanging on the Telephone*)

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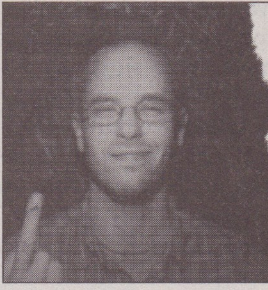
P.S. Happy birthday, Courtney!



THREE CHORD POLITICS
chris hubbard

So, New Year's just passed, and you know what that means… Prepare for a deluge of "Top Ten" and "Best of 2006" lists from all your favorite tastemakers and know-it-alls throughout the media. In anticipation of next month's *MRR* staff year-end top ten issue (here's a preview: trendy hype bands from foreign countries are *in!*), I've got a few preliminary picks to spout off about before everyone gets sick of it. Actually, not all that much of the following has to do with 2006, go figure…

Best Old Band I Discovered in '06: An email from a friend of mine in February clued me in to the existence of a group from the UK called "The Incredible Kidda Band." His description was something along the lines of "late-'70s Buzzcocks-style power pop" and he assured me that it was killer. I had to hear it. A quick internet search determined that the Kidda Band released a couple singles back in the day (now quite rare and sought-after), but also that Detour Records put out a double album of mostly unreleased material in 2000. Unfortunately, this was out of print as well. Next stop was the *MRR* record library database. Turns out we have the double LP in the collection, but when I pulled it out—it was fucking missing the first disc! I have yet to solve this frustrating mystery…maybe whoever snagged *MRR*'s Fix – *Vengeance* grabbed it as well. Anyway, disc two was no letdown by any means. As Golnar can attest, I must have listened to that record five times a day for a month *[more like ten times a day for three months, but whatever, who's counting…—Golnar]*. And when I finally got a copy of the complete album (albeit on CD), the first disc was even better. Over an hour's worth of total classic power pop rivaling the best of that genre. I'm nuts about this band, to the point that I dropped a relatively embar-

rassing sum of money to order from overseas a home demos CD-R that is basically one dude from the band playing the songs with a drum machine. (Perhaps even more embarrassingly, I love it.) Allegedly, Detour is supposed to reissue the double LP at some point—I can't wait.

Best Current Band I Discovered in '06: Filip Fuchs, longtime *MRR* contributor and distributor in the Czech Republic and guitarist for the band See You In Hell, came to visit the Bay Area for the 625/Six Weeks/Prank Fest last winter, and gave me an LP by what he said was in his opinion the best current Czech band—Complicité Candide. I'm not one to disagree. When I dropped the needle on the record, I was floored. I would attempt to describe this band as Eastern European hardcore with a Black Flag influence, but really they've got their own sound—bleak, desperate, twisted, discordant, and almost catchy at times. And the singer, wow. It's like he's from another planet—he makes Jello sound like Frank Sinatra (to borrow an apt comparison). I have no idea what he's saying (the lyrics are in Czech, and the English translations are actually more confusing and intriguing), and it's great. This band has put out two LPs, a 10" EP, and a split 7". They're all good, but the second LP, *Zapalte Ohn/Mrtví Havlové,* and the 10" are absolutely fuckin' amazing. If you're into bands like Dezerter or Rudimentary Peni, you've gotta track down these records; they're on the Malarie label from the Czech Republic, and probably still available.

Best Live Set Witnessed in '06: Yet another band I heard on recommendation—this time from Will Kinser, who brought a CD-R of his friends' band Peligro Social by the house one day. I thought it was great, but it couldn't prepare me for the first time I saw them play. The show was at Burnt Ramen, sometime last spring I think. I was looking forward to checking them out, but was not expecting the full intensity of these five guys. They were on fire—especially the singer, jumping around, going off. There was one fan that was so into it that she was attacking other people in the audience, singing along, and rolling on the floor (doing "the worm"). At one point she grabbed me and ripped the buttons out of my shirt. She later knocked another person clean unconscious, and the show had to be stopped until the person came to. I've been fortunate enough to see this band a bunch more times since then—and when they're not having equipment trouble, they're great—but nothing can compare to that first time…

* * *

On an unrelated note, *MRR* has decided to raise our subscription rates. It's been a long time coming, and probably should have happened awhile ago, but with postage increases and higher printing costs over the last few years—not to mention, with places like Tower going out of business, having to deal with more subscriptions due to the zine being harder to find on the newsstand—we feel it's necessary to be able to keep *MRR* running. At our current rates, especially the discounted re-subscribe one, we are barely making back production costs. It's a tough decision, not in the least because our subscribers (especially those overseas who pay a small fortune to have the zine shipped airmail every month) are our most dedicated supporters. Without them, certainly *MRR* would not have been able to last 25 years in an increasingly hostile environment for printed magazines. We hope you all out there understand, and sincerely thank you for your continued support of this zine. For real—it's no small matter to purchase *MRR* regularly in this day and age, and we appreciate it.

* * *

Well, there ya have it… Another year down the tubes. If you wanna in touch with me: chris@maximumrocknroll.com

PEOPS

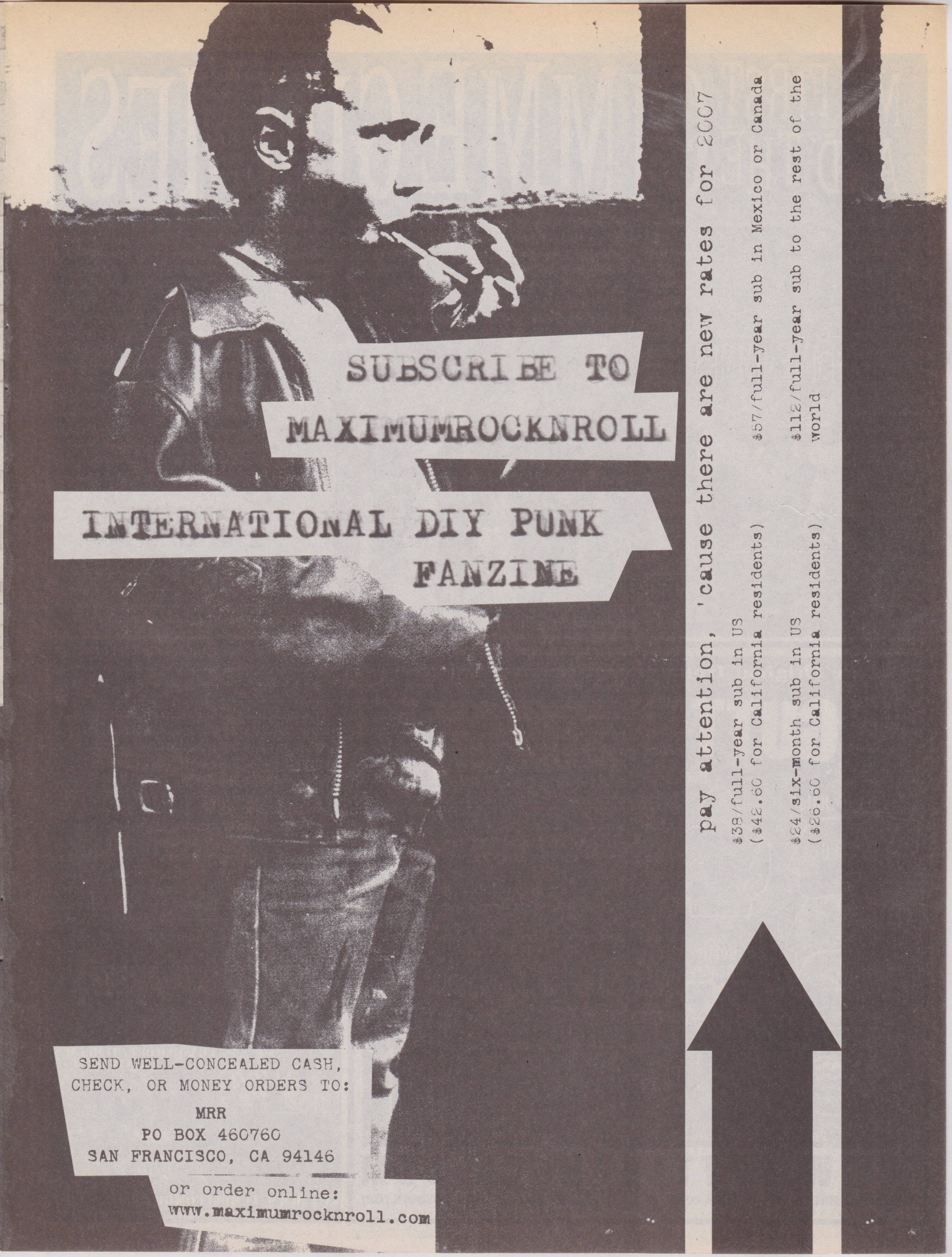
IT WAS 2003 - WINTER - & I DIDNT WANT TO SPEND ANOTHER WINTER IN VANCOUVER AT THE ALF HOUSE WITH 28 ROOM MATES SO I DECIDED TO HITCH HIKE TO CALIFORNIA WITH MY ROOM MATE SKIDGE - WE HAD 28 HOBO KIDS STAYING AT OUR HOUSE - SO WE DID THE NORTHWEST THEN WE GOT THIS LONG HAUL RIDE FROM THIS HIPPIE WHO WAS GOING ALL THE WAY TO S.F. - HE TOLD US HE RUNS HEAD FEST - SO WE GOT TO OAKLAND ON CHRISTMAS DAY & I GOT REALLY BAD STREP THROAT & DECIDED I'D DIE MY HAIR TO KILL MY BOREDOM SINCE I WAS SICK & NOT DOING MUCH SO WE DECIDED TO SPLIT A BOX OF HAIR DYE THAT WE GOT FOR $2 AT WALGREENS - NEXT DAY SKIDGE'S HEAD STARTED GETTING REALLY ITCHY & PUFFY & I STARTED GETTING THIS WEIRD RASH ALL OVER MY HAND - WE TRIED GOING TO THE BERKELEY FREE CLINIC BUT THEY WOULDN'T DEAL WITH RASHES ABOVE THE NECK SO WE WENT TO SOME RANDOM WALK IN CLINIC WHERE THE DOCTOR TOLD US WE HAD HERPES - WE WERE USING FAKE NAMES WHICH WAS REALLY FUNNY BECAUSE HE WAS ASKING US ALL THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR SEXUAL HISTORY BUT HE WAS CALLING ME ANNABEL SO I FELT LIKE I COULD TELL HIM ANYTHING - EVENTUALLY WE WENT SOME WHERE & GOT ANTIBIOTICS BUT THINGS WERENT GETTING ANY BETTER SO SKIDGE GOT REALLY MAD AT ME & ☆ →

☆ - WOULDNT TALK TO ME FOR 2 DAYS - EVENTUALLY WE JUST DECIDED TO GO SOUTH TO MEET UP WITH OUR FRIENDS IN SANTA BARBARA WHO HAD JUST OPENED A SQUAT & BY THAT TIME SKIDGE'S HEAD WAS PUSSING SO BAD WE HAD TO CARRY AROUND A TOWEL - WITHIN 3 DAYS OUR SQUAT GOT LOCKED UP - OUR STUFF WAS LOCKED IN & I GOT IT BACK BY WAITING ON THE FRONT LAWN TIL THE COPS SHOW UP & CRYING TIL THEY LET ME GET IT - I TOLD THEM I WAS FROM EUGENE SO THEY WOULDNT DEPORT ME - SO WE DECIDED TO SKIP TOWN & GO TO HOLLYWOOD BUT THE RASH WAS SPREADING TO SKIDGES EYES SO INSTEAD WE GOT A BUS BACK TO THE ALF HOUSE

Juls Generic – 10/22/2K6 – Vancouver Canada

I met Juls at the Vancouver Can-Zine (big zine fest) – my friend Nate (who does the zine Shoes) introduced me – we then went & hung out on some cheesey bar patio & froze just because we wanted to smoke cigarettes with our beer & cider – Juls is one of the original instigators of the infamous ALF house in Vancouver (I'm proud to say that my band Zero Content played a show there a few years ago) – she also makes totally kickass zines – I was really impressed & inspired by her writing – & Juls is also in the band Margaret Thrasher who I haven't heard yet but they have been getting great reviews – I highly recommend contacting her to get some zines or 7"s! – julsgeneric@hotmail.com

to contact Fly email – fly@bway.net (put MRR in the subject so I know its not spam) – PEOP(le)s #2 &#3 zines are available for $5 pp US each – *Dog Dayz* #1 also available for $5 pp US – *Dog Dayz* #2 will be out sometime in January! – contact Fly, PO Box 1318, Cooper Stn, NYC NY 10276



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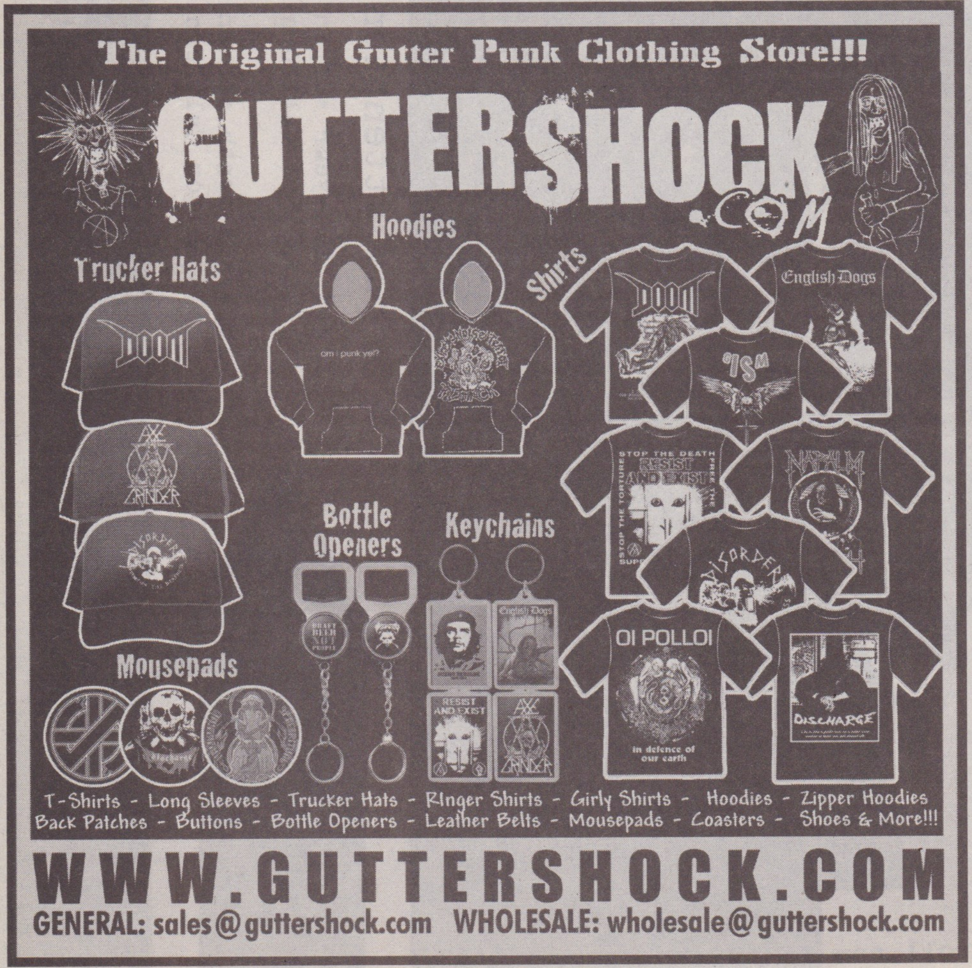
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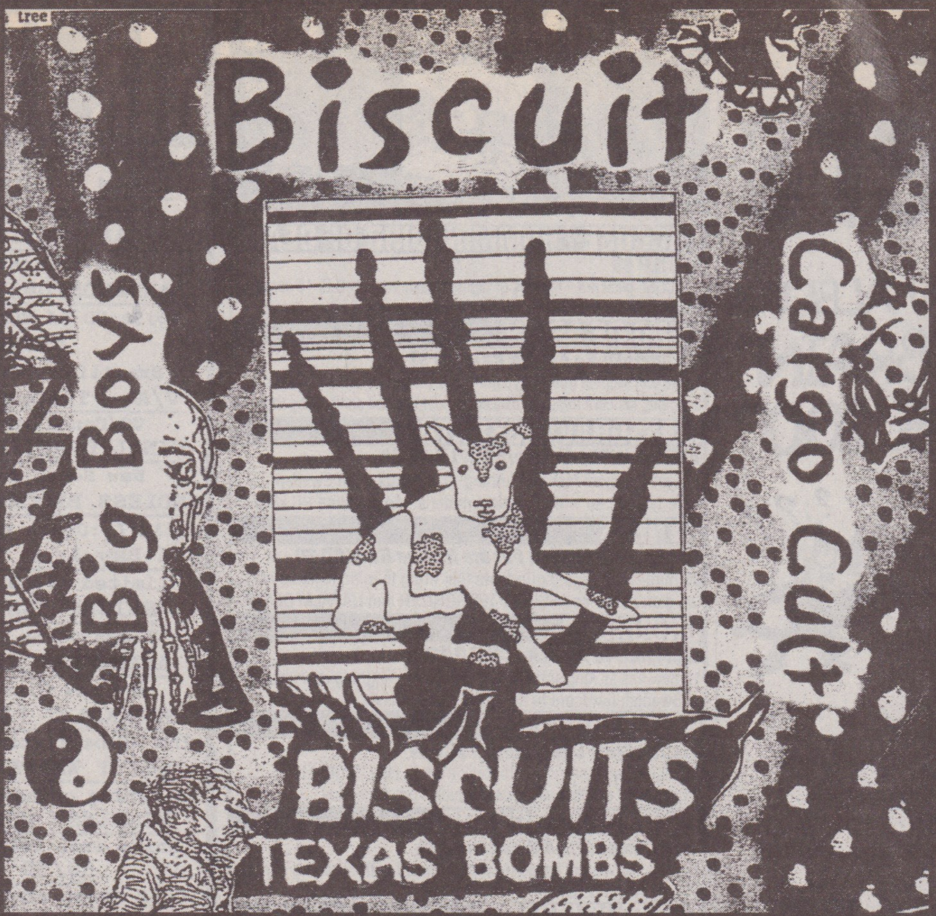

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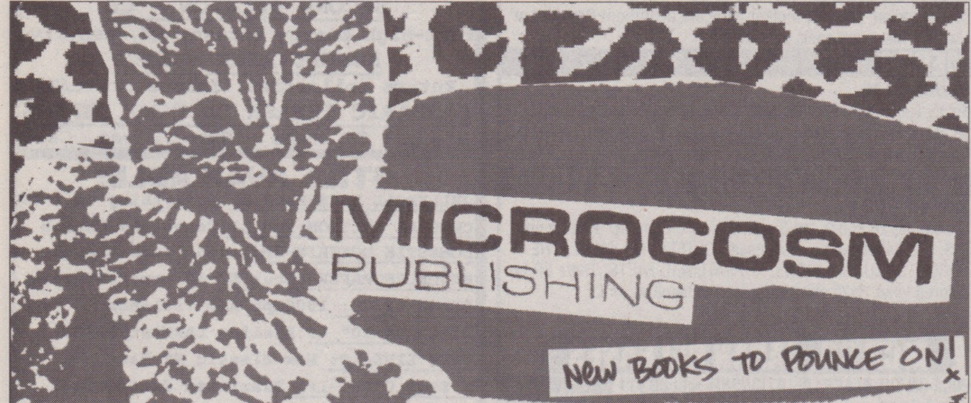

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Boy Scouts on the Front Line in the Fight Against Piracy

By Alexander Billet (alexbillet@hotmail.com)

The "Scout Law" of the Boy Scouts of America reads "A scout is true to his family, Scout leaders, friends, school, and nation." And now they've apparently added "Paramount, Sony, EMI, Warner Brothers, and Walt Disney" to that list. An October 20th press release from the Motion Picture Association of America announced that it has teamed up with over 52,000 Boy Scouts in the Los Angeles area to unveil the latest merit badge: the Respect Copyrights Activity Patch. The badge's artwork includes the images of a film reel, a record, and the familiar circle-C copyright logo.

"Working with the Boy Scouts, we have the opportunity to educate a new generation about how movies are made, why they are valuable, and hopefully change attitudes about intellectual property theft," said Dan Glickman, the Chairman and CEO of the MPAA. The program is meant to inform Scouts about the danger of internet "piracy" and teach them and their friends how to discourage it (i.e. how to identify counterfeit CDs and DVDs). According to the Los Angeles Times, the inspiration came from a Boy Scout troop in Hong Kong which had its members pledge to not only abstain from using pirated files, but also turn in groups and individuals who did. While the LA Scouts have yet to go this far, one wonders when they will.

That the Boy Scouts, whose original bylaws required loyalty to one's own employer, have eagerly signed up for this project is unsurprising. But the story has sent a shock wave through the blogosphere. Within hours of the press release, Web sites all over the country started registering their discontent. "Gosh," one post sarcastically said, "if only we had the money to buy off the Boy Scouts and get their organization to create badges that serve our interests too."

It seems clear that most people take a dim view of the MPAA-Boy Scouts joint venture. And there is little wonder why. Ever since it became possible to download music and film over the internet, the MPAA, along with its counterpart in the recording industry, the Recording Industry Association of America, has engaged in nothing short of a crusade to halt the spread of "unauthorized" material. This past summer, the MPAA's international arm raided and arrested 915 people in Asia and the South Pacific for possession of pirated DVDs. Over the past several years, over 2,500 people worldwide have been arrested on the same charge.

The RIAA, for its part, has been just as ruthless in prosecuting music fans in this country. Since taking Napster to court seven years ago, it has gone after file-sharers with the shamelessness of Mark Foley after one too many Barry White songs. The long list of defendants includes single parents, twelve-year-old girls, and recently deceased grandmothers. The RIAA offers surviving families a sixty-day grieving period before deposition. The RIAA shows little remorse for those whom it bankrupts. Cassi Hunt, a student at MIT and accused file-sharer, was even told by an RIAA representative that "the RIAA has been known to suggest that students drop out of college or go to community college in order to be able to afford settlements."

Of course, both industries claim that they are merely trying to protect the integrity of the artists, as well as jobs of such workers as cameramen and soundboard-ops. The MPAA's press release, for example, cites "5.5 billion dollars in lost earnings among US workers" and "141,030 lost jobs." Yet even the most cursory glance at the stocks and earnings of MPAA member studios will show that they are far from bankruptcy. In the tangled web of the entertainment industry, where record companies and film studios are owned by the behemoth media conglomerates, the profits lost as a result of file-sharing are negligible if existent at all.

Take Viacom. Viacom's subsidiary, Paramount Pictures, was the least profitable of the Hollywood "big six" that make up the MPAA. Poor guys only raked in $17 billion last year. But despite a 17 percent decrease in profits in 2004, the company still managed to pay its Chairman, Sumner Redstone, a base salary of $4.97 million and a bonus of over $16 million. Of course, after Viacom split off into two different companies, Redstone had to take a pay-cut. But when all is said and done, by the end of next fiscal year, Redstone will still have made enough in the past three years to buy almost four million people a free movie ticket. That's more than the population of Boston, Washington DC, San Francisco, and Dallas combined. It hardly looks as if those pesky teenagers downloading School of Rock in their basement are sending Redstone and company to the poorhouse any time soon.

Likewise, record companies not only are not suffering in the age of file-sharing but appear to be thriving. The largest four record companies (EMI, Sony BMG, Universal Music, and Warner) account for over 90 percent of the world's music sales and seem to operate more like a cartel than anything else. In 2003, the big four settled a case brought by 43 state Attorney Generals accusing them of price fixing.

Moreover, the claim of saving jobs rings hollow in the case of Sony and BMG, which after its merger last year laid off around 2,000 workers. Are these "unfortunate" cutbacks the result of a massive dip in profits? Hardly. Several critics have pointed to the upswing in album sales during the height of Napster days and their subsequent fall after Napster and others were cracked down on. A 17-week study by Harvard Business School in 2002 could find no negative relationship between downloading and album sales and even discovered that file-sharing actually increased the sales of the most popular albums.

So why have both industries engaged in such severe crackdowns? What has caused them to go to these extreme lengths, the MPAA almost literally recruiting Boy Scouts to snitch on their friends? Perhaps it's not just about sheer profits.

What truly scares both industries, I submit, is that, now, there are means that allow bands and filmmakers to share their creations independent of corporate control. The advent of MP3s and internet movies meant that suddenly artists could directly deliver their work to their fans without having to wait for a corporate go-ahead. Artists from Prince to Wilco have released their albums online before hitting the stores, and independent filmmakers are seeing the internet as a legitimate way to gain notice. Nicole Colson summed it up well in a 2004 article: "The music industry isn't against downloading per se. It's against the idea that fans and artists should be able to step outside the industry's control."

If record companies really cared about their artists' integrity, then they would pay bands more than a measly 15 percent of album sales. If the film industry cared about movie-goers, then they would stop hiking ticket prices. And if they cared about jobs, then they would stop patting themselves on the back with bonuses big enough to feed a small country.

The bottom line is that everyone deserves art, film, and music in their lives. But if we really want it to be ours, then we need to understand that the "industries" are obsolete. In the end, people like Richard Branson and Michael Eisner are little more than parasites looking to make a buck off what we create and enjoy. And like all parasites, they need us a lot more than we need them.

China's White Dolphin Called Extinct After 20 Million Years

From an article by the Associated Press

An expedition searching for a rare Yangtze River dolphin ended Wednesday without a single sighting and with the team's leader saying one of the world's oldest species was effectively extinct. The white dolphin known as *baiji*, shy and nearly blind, dates back some 20 million years. Its disappearance is believed to be the first time in a half-century, since hunting killed off the Caribbean monk seal, that a large aquatic mammal has been driven to extinction. A few *baiji* may still exist in their native Yangtze habitat in eastern China but not in sufficient numbers to breed and ward off extinction, said August Pfluger, the Swiss co-leader of the joint Chinese-foreign expedition.

"We have to accept the fact, that the *Baiji* is functionally extinct. We lost the race," Pfluger said in a statement released by the expedition. "It is a tragedy, a loss not only for China, but for the entire world. We are all incredibly sad."

Overfishing and shipping traffic, whose engines interfere with the sonar the *baiji* uses to navigate and feed, are likely the main reasons for the mammal's decline, Pfluger said. Though the Yangtze is polluted, water samples taken by the expedition every 30 miles did not show high concentrations of toxic substances, the statement said. For nearly six weeks, Pfluger's team of 30 scientists scoured a 1,000-mile heavily trafficked stretch of the Yangtze, where the *baiji* once thrived. The expedition's two boats, equipped with high-tech binoculars and underwater microphones, trailed each other an hour apart without radio contact so that a sighting by one vessel would not prejudice the other.

Around 400 *baiji* were believed to be living in the Yangtze in the 1980s. The last full-fledged search, in 1997, yielded 13 confirmed sightings, and a fisherman claimed to have seen a *baiji* in 2004, Pfluger said in an earlier interview. At least 20 to 25 *baiji* would now be needed to give the species a chance to survive, the group's statement said, citing Wang Ding, a hydrobiologist and China's foremost campaigner for the *baiji*.

Pfluger, an economist by training who later went to work for an environmental group, was a member of the 1997 expedition and recalls the excitement of seeing a *baiji* cavorting in the waters near Dongting Lake. "It marked me," he said in an interview Monday. He went on to set up the baiji.org Foundation to save the dolphin. That goal having evaporated, Pfluger said his foundation would turn to teaching sustainable fishing practices and trying to save other freshwater dolphins. The expedition also surveyed one of those dwindling species, the Yangtze finless porpoise, finding less than 400 of them. "The situation of the finless porpoise is just like that of the *baiji* 20 years ago," Wang, the Chinese scientist, said in the statement. "Their numbers are declining at an alarming rate. If we do not act soon they will become a second *baiji*."

Pfluger and an occasional online diary kept by expedition members traced a dispiriting situation, as day after day team members engaged in a fruitless search for the *baiji*. "At first the atmosphere was 'Let's go. Let's go save this damn species,"' Pfluger said. "As the weeks went on we got more desperate and had to motivate each other."

Bill Would Allow Legally Blind Texans to Hunt

From an article in the Houston Chronicle

A state lawmaker wants to make sure no Texan is left out when it comes to hunting, even if the hunter is legally blind. Rep. Edmund Kuempel, a Seguin Republican, has filed a bill for the 2007 legislative session that would allow legally blind hunters to use a laser sight, or lighted pointing instrument. The devices are forbidden for sighted hunters. Blind hunters would also have to have a sighted hunter along with them, but they could hunt any game that sighted people can hunt in the same seasons and using the same weapons.

"This opens up the fun of hunting to additional people, and I think that's great," Kuempel said. Visually impaired people are able to shoot with the aid of a sighted person, he said. "I've seen this on TV before, when they're taking target practice," Kuempel said. "When they aim the gun the guide tells them, aim two inches higher or two inches lower and you're on the target, and you're off and running."

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, which regulates hunting in Texas, currently does not have a definition of what constitutes a legally blind hunter. Kuempel's bill would give the agency until Jan. 1, 2008, to come up with a definition so that the law could be enforced. The hunter would have to carry proof that he or she is legally blind.

Kuempel's bill would amend the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code. Under existing law, the use of laser sights, spotlights and headlights is strictly prohibited in all Texas hunting. The Texas Legislature convenes Jan. 9 for its 140-day session. Lawmakers have been busy since November filing proposed legislation on an array of subjects. The Legislature meets every two years in regular session.

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FBI Taps Cell Phone Mic as Eavesdropping Tool

From an article on Zdnet.com

The FBI appears to have begun using a novel form of electronic surveillance in criminal investigations: remotely activating a mobile phone's microphone and using it to eavesdrop on nearby conversations. The technique is called a "roving bug," and was approved by top US Department of Justice officials for use against members of a New York organized crime family who were wary of conventional surveillance techniques such as tailing a suspect or wiretapping him. Nextel cell phones owned by two alleged mobsters, John Ardito and his attorney Peter Peluso, were used by the FBI to listen in on nearby conversations. The FBI views Ardito as one of the most powerful men in the Genovese family, a major part of the national Mafia.

The surveillance technique came to light in an opinion published this week by US District Judge Lewis Kaplan. He ruled that the "roving bug" was legal because federal wiretapping law is broad enough to permit eavesdropping even of conversations that take place near a suspect's cell phone. Kaplan's opinion said that the eavesdropping technique "functioned whether the phone was powered on or off." Some handsets can't be fully powered down without removing the battery; for instance, some Nokia models will wake up when turned off if an alarm is set.

While the Genovese crime family prosecution appears to be the first time a remote-eavesdropping mechanism has been used in a criminal case, the technique has been discussed in security circles for years. The US Commerce Department's security office warns that "a cellular telephone can be turned into a microphone and transmitter for the purpose of listening to conversations in the vicinity of the phone." An article in the *Financial Times* last year said mobile providers can "remotely install a piece of software on to any handset, without the owner's knowledge, which will activate the microphone even when its owner is not making a call." Nextel and Samsung handsets and the Motorola Razr are especially vulnerable to software downloads that activate their microphones, said James Atkinson, a counter-surveillance consultant who has worked closely with government agencies. "They can be remotely accessed and made to transmit room audio all the time," he said. "You can do that without having physical access to the phone."

Because modern handsets are miniature computers, downloaded software could modify the usual interface that always displays when a call is in progress. The spyware could then place a call to the FBI and activate the microphone—all without the owner knowing it happened. (The FBI declined to comment on Friday.) "If a phone has in fact been modified to act as a bug, the only way to counteract that is to either have a bugsweeper follow you around 24-7, which is not practical, or to peel the battery off the phone," Atkinson said. Security-conscious corporate executives routinely remove the batteries from their cell phones, he added.

The FBI's Joint Organized Crime Task Force, which includes members of the New York police department, had little luck with conventional surveillance of the Genovese family. They did have a confidential source who reported the suspects met at restaurants including Brunello Trattoria in New Rochelle, NY, which the FBI then bugged. But in July 2003, Ardito and his crew discovered bugs in three restaurants, and the FBI quietly removed the rest. Conversations recounted in FBI affidavits show the men were also highly suspicious of being tailed by police and avoided conversations on cell phones whenever possible. That led the FBI to resort to "roving bugs," first of Ardito's Nextel handset and then of Peluso's. US District Judge Barbara Jones approved them in a series of orders in 2003 and 2004, and said she expected to "be advised of the locations" of the suspects when their conversations were recorded.

Details of how the Nextel bugs worked are sketchy. Court documents, including an affidavit prepared by Assistant US Attorney Jonathan Kolodner in September 2003, refer to them as a "listening device placed in the cellular telephone." That phrase could refer to software or hardware. One private investigator interviewed by CNET News.com, Skipp Porteous of Sherlock Investigations in New York, said he believed the FBI planted a physical bug somewhere in the Nextel handset and did not remotely activate the microphone. "They had to have physical possession of the phone to do it," Porteous said. "There are several ways that they could have gotten physical possession. Then they monitored the bug from fairly nearby."

But other experts thought microphone activation is the more likely scenario, mostly because the battery in a tiny bug would not have lasted a year and because court documents say the bug works anywhere "within the United States"—in other words, outside the range of a nearby FBI agent armed with a radio receiver. In addition, a paranoid Mafioso likely would be suspicious of any ploy to get him to hand over a cell phone so a bug could be planted. And Kolodner's affidavit seeking a court order lists Ardito's phone number, his 15-digit International Mobile Subscriber Identifier, and lists Nextel Communications as the service provider, all of which would be unnecessary if a physical bug were being planted. A BBC article from 2004 reported that intelligence agencies routinely employ the remote-activation method. "A mobile sitting on the desk of a politician or businessman can act as a powerful, undetectable bug," the article said, "enabling them to be activated at a later date to pick up sounds even when the receiver is down."

For its part, Nextel said through spokesman Travis Sowders: "We're not aware of this investigation, and we weren't asked to participate." Other mobile providers were reluctant to talk about this kind of surveillance. Verizon Wireless said only that it "works closely with law enforcement and public safety officials. When presented with legally authorized orders, we assist law enforcement in every way possible." A Motorola representative said that "your best source in this case would be the FBI itself." Cingular, T-Mobile, and the CTIA trade association did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

This isn't the first time the federal government has pushed at the limits of electronic surveillance when investigating reputed mobsters. In one case involving Nicodemo S. Scarfo, the alleged mastermind of a loan shark operation in New Jersey, the FBI found itself thwarted when Scarfo used Pretty Good Privacy software (PGP) to encode confidential business data. So with a judge's approval, FBI agents repeatedly snuck into Scarfo's business to plant a keystroke logger and monitor its output. Like Ardito's lawyers, Scarfo's defense attorneys argued that the then-novel technique was not legal and that the information gleaned through it could not be used. Also like Ardito, Scarfo's lawyers lost when a judge ruled in January 2002 that the evidence was admissible. This week, Judge Kaplan in the southern district of New York concluded that the "roving bugs" were legally permitted to capture hundreds of hours of conversations because the FBI had obtained a court order and alternatives probably wouldn't work. The FBI's "applications made a sufficient case for electronic surveillance," Kaplan wrote. "They indicated that alternative methods of investigation either had failed or were unlikely to produce results, in part because the subjects deliberately avoided government surveillance."

Bill Stollhans, president of the Private Investigators Association of Virginia, said such a technique would be legally reserved for police armed with court orders, not private investigators. There is "no law that would allow me as a private investigator to use that type of technique," he said. "That is exclusively for law enforcement. It is not allowable or not legal in the private sector. No client of mine can ask me to overhear telephone or strictly oral conversations."

Surreptitious activation of built-in microphones by the FBI has been done before. A 2003 lawsuit revealed that the FBI was able to surreptitiously turn on the built-in microphones in automotive systems like General Motors' OnStar to snoop on passengers' conversations. When FBI agents remotely activated the system and were listening in, passengers in the vehicle could not tell that their conversations were being monitored. Malicious hackers have followed suit. A report last year said Spanish authorities had detained a man who wrote a Trojan horse that secretly activated a computer's video camera and forwarded him the recordings.

Internet Addiction a Psychological Disorder?

From an article in Business Week written by Catherine Holahan

By his own admission, James Pacenza was spending too much time in internet chat rooms, in some of them discussing sex. He goes so far as to call his interest in inappropriate websites a form of addiction that stems from the posttraumatic stress disorder he's suffered since returning from Vietnam. Whatever it's called, Pacenza's chat-room habit cost him his job. After 19 years at IBM's East Fishkill plant, Pacenza was fired in May, 2003, after a fellow employee noticed discussion of a sex act on a chat room open on Pacenza's computer. IBM maintains that logging onto the website was a violation of its business conduct guidelines and a misuse of company property—and that it was well within its rights to terminate Pacenza's employment.

Pacenza and his attorney beg to differ. They filed suit in a New York US District Court in July, 2004, seeking $5 million for wrongful termination. Earlier in the year, Pacenza had admitted to a superior that he had a problem with the internet at home. Pacenza's attorney, Michael Diederich Jr., alleges that the perception that Pacenza was addicted to the internet caused IBM to fire first without asking questions or "even attempting to examine the situation." Diederich says there are several steps IBM could have taken, including limiting his internet use or blocking certain sites. "It's not productive or useful for the employer to unfairly terminate employees," says Diederich.

The case was held up for years due to Pacenza's medical problems and his attorney's service as a military lawyer in Iraq. But it has come back to the fore recently, and IBM on Dec. 8 sought a dismissal of the case, saying it's without merit. On the surface, Pacenza's may appear to be an open-and-shut case. He doesn't deny logging onto the chat room at work, and company policy provides for the termination of employees who access inappropriate websites.

Certifying Addiction

But cases like Pacenza's, which involve internet misuse, may no longer be quite so simple, thanks to a growing debate over whether internet abuse is a legitimate addiction, akin to alcoholism. Attorneys say recognition by a court—whether in this or some future litigation—that Internet abuse is an uncontrollable addiction, and not just a bad habit, could redefine the condition as a psychological impairment worthy of protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

That in turn would have far-reaching ramifications for how companies deal with workplace internet use and abuse. For starters, businesses could be compelled to allow medical leave, provide counseling to, or make other accommodations for employees who can't control internet use, says Brian East, co-chair of the disability rights committee of the National Employment Lawyers' Association. East says recognizing internet abuse as an addiction would make it more difficult for employers to fire employees who have a problem. "Assuming it is recognized as an impairment...it is analyzed the same way as alcoholism," says East.

That's a big assumption—and there's intense debate over whether compulsive internet use should be recognized as an addiction. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) doesn't include internet addiction in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, which serves as the basis for many ADA claims related to mental disabilities. Substance abuse, on the other hand, is listed in a special category under substance-use disorders. Internet addiction would not be eligible for inclusion in the manual until nearly 2012, when the next edition is scheduled to be released, according to the APA.

Compulsive Behavior

Whatever the APA stance, several psychiatrists and psychologists already say compulsive internet overuse can legitimately be called an addiction. Among them is Dr. David Greenfield, an assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and author of the 1999 book Virtual Addiction. He compares compulsive internet use to alcoholism, drug abuse, or pathological gambling.

Like alcoholics or those who abuse drugs, people who are addicted to the internet use it to change their mood and feel better, says Greenfield. There are also many who can't stop using it, despite reprimands from work, disputes with family and friends, and other negative effects such as debt due to compulsive internet shopping or gambling. "It's not surprising that it is not defined yet, because these things change very slowly," says Greenfield. "But when you are in clinical practice and you are dealing with people's lives, you can't wait for those issues to be addressed. There is a huge problem with internet abuse in the workplace, and you can't pretend that they don't exist because there isn't a label."

In October, researchers at Stanford University's medical school released a study showing that a significant number of Americans show addiction symptoms with regard to the internet. Some 14% reported that it was hard to stay away from the internet for a several-day stretch. More than 12% said they stayed online longer than intended and nearly 9% said they hid their internet use from loved ones or employers. Roughly 6% said relationships had suffered due to excessive internet use.

Dr. Elias Aboujaoude, director of Stanford's Impulse Control Disorders Clinic, which conducted the study, says there are clear similarities between excessive internet use and other addictions. "People are very secretive, people will tell me that they feel restless when they go for a whole afternoon without checking email, there is mounting anxiety when they try to cut back on their online use," says Aboujaoude. However, he stops short of calling it an addiction. The clinic is designing a more rigorous study aimed at determining whether internet abuse is an addiction and not just a bad habit, or a manifestation of another addiction or psychological problem. "Based on our studies there are definitely red flags and there are things that should be followed up on. But until that is done, you are not going to find a serious researcher calling this internet addiction," says Aboujaoude. "It's too early to coin a new term 'internet addiction.'"

Treatment Options

Not according to psychologist Kimberly Young, founder of the Center for Internet Addiction Recovery in Bradford, Pa. She says that the US lags behind other countries in its recognition of compulsive internet use as a legitimate addiction worthy of specialized treatment. Korea, for example, has launched the Centre for Internet Addiction Prevention & Counseling in response to what the government sees as the growing problem of Internet addicts in its highly wired society. In October, a 24-year-old died after playing an online game nonstop for 86 hours. "They have been able to move faster than we have in America," says Young of the Korean government. "They have a lot of government funding to put together these clinics."

China also recognizes internet addiction as a legitimate problem. Chinese employers can send workers to a two-week rehabilitation clinic for internet issues. Besides counseling, the clinic provides regimented exercise and medical treatment to help people become healthy and redirect their energy.

US companies ought to wake up to the problem in order to avoid lost productivity from workers and liability for unjust termination or disciplinary action regarding the internet. "If you have something like the Americans with Disabilities Act, which recognizes many addictions as a disability, it is not a stretch to see that people who are getting in trouble with the Internet are going to see it as a legitimate addiction and sue," says Greenfield. "It is only a matter of time before one of these suits is successful."

Just how many suits are coming down the pike isn't clear, and Pacenza's is among the

earliest to weave internet addiction into a wrongful termination suit. There have been several other legal battles relating to presumed internet addiction, though often those involve online games or chat rooms that parents say contribute to a child's problems.

Workplace Prevention

Even as the debate rages on within the medical community and increasingly in the courts, some businesses are taking steps to combat internet addiction beyond implementing internet -use policies. Young, author of *Caught in the Net*, says she regularly speaks to companies about internet addiction. "They want to deal with the problem of abuse and minimize that as much as they can," she says. Young says she sees everyone from IT professionals obsessed with web surfing, to administrative assistants glued to eBay, to self-employed lawyers who are missing deadlines because of a fixation with internet porn. Still, most companies are leery of treating internet abuse as an addiction. "Overall companies are still a little hesitant to look at it as an addiction," says Young. "But if they look at the costs, it makes more sense than just firing people."

Employers try to alert employees to the potential of the problem, by paying for talks or literature, in order to avoid problems such as lost productivity, too much demand on company bandwidth, and sexual-harassment claims from employees who see objectionable material on a colleague's computer. However, some businesses are concerned enough about the cost of replacing otherwise good employees that they send employees to rehabilitation clinics.

When it comes to internet overuse, some companies are finding the best cure isn't firing, but preventive medicine. Some limit internet access to only those employees who need it to do their jobs. And they are spending money on filtering and blocking software to keep employees from surfing the web for personal use.

Sensible Limits

Continental Airlines acknowledges it's impossible to ban all personal use of the web at work. Louis Obdyke, Continental's managing attorney for labor and employment issues, says the company lets employees occasionally surf the web, shop, bank, or do other activities online—providing it doesn't interfere with productivity. "It's pretty much under a rule of reason," says Obdyke. "If you get your work done and you go on the Internet during the workday, we wouldn't see that as a problem."

When internet use causes work to suffer, stiffer measures are taken. And an employee who can't improve or who visits adult or pornographic sites while at work is susceptible to firing. As for whether internet abuse is comparable to other disorders such as alcoholism, Obdyke is clear: "We don't recognize this internet addiction idea."

Depending on the outcome of Pacenza's case and others likely to follow, companies like Continental may have to.

Health Department Abandons Proposed Change to Transgender Birth Certificates

NYC Health Department Refuses to Recognize Transgender People Without Gender Confirming Surgery

From an article on nyc.indymedia.org

The eyes of the world were on a proposed change to how transgender New Yorkers could change the gender designation on their birth certificates. Those eyes will now turn away as the hopes for a positive verdict are dashed, as are the chances that the reverberations of such a decision would spread out and make transgender people's lives a little bit easier, a little bit safer. "How can you send a person with a penis to a women's prison?", an anonymous health department official decried. The Board of Health's press release was more circumspect in its language.

After reviewing that plan and input received during the public comments period, the Health Department concluded that the proposal would have broader societal ramifications than anticipated. Besides being a key element of identity, gender has important implications for many societal institutions that need to segregate people by sex. These include hospitals, schools and jails, as well as some workplaces.

At the recent public forum, transgender activists and allies gathered to impress upon the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene the urgent need for official recognition of the stark realities many transgender people face. Gender confirming surgery (GCS) is either unwanted or unattainable for a large percentage of the population, be it for personal, financial or medical reasons. For transgender men, the surgical technique is regrettably suboptimal. Yet the physical configuration of one's genitals is considered the ultimate determinant of one's gender by the law and society at large. This exposes many transgender people to constant and sometimes extreme dangers.

My experience is in many ways typical of the path many people are forced to take when they begin to assert their existence to the world. I was fired from my job in mental health shortly after I began to "transition." In short order I was homeless, and lived on the streets and in abandoned and toxic buildings for two years. I felt it was too risky to go to a shelter and avail myself to the social services that almost all other people have ready access to because I would have been placed with men. There was a hopeful moment when a residential placement assured me that I would be housed in a safe environment, and then reversed itself at the last minute because "it might make some clients uncomfortable." Avoiding their supposed discomfort was more important than helping me get off the street.

I'm a medic, a person who gives free medical care during protests and demonstrations. I was arrested while I was helping set up the healthcare infrastructure for a large protest and separated from my two fellow arrestees. While they were released overnight, I was charged with possession (of my meds) and sent to a large, all-male prison. All male, except for me. I was placed into a 200-person dormitory. For the next few days, my life was a dangerous, living hell. Crashing off my meds, undergoing hormonal menopause, I was shuffled to the psych ward, the health ward, another 200-person dormitory, and was eventually locked in a maximum security cell. I won't say what happened to me during that time. It wasn't fun, and my life was in danger every second I was there. This was not in New York City, although I doubt I would have been any safer here.

I can't afford GCS. Even though I am now off the street I'm almost certainly locked into the lowest rungs of poverty. I can't leave the country to have the surgery done in less expensive Thailand because I can't get a passport. Although all my documentation states that I'm female, my birth certificate does not. And in this new age of increased vigilance about identity documents I take a risk every time someone runs a background check on me.

My experience is in many ways typical, and in many ways not. I've survived, so far. The now dead changes to the health codes are a further barrier to transgender people being able to have safe, productive lives. Moreover, this increases the risk that many people, including myself, will not have lives at all.

Homeland Security Chief Defends Real ID Plan

From an article by Anne Broache from CNET News.com

US Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff defended forthcoming national ID cards as vital for security and consistent with privacy rights. Chertoff said one of his agency's top goals next year is to forge ahead with recommendations for the controversial documents established by a federal law called the Real ID Act in May 2005. By 2008, Americans may be required to present such federally approved cards—which must be electronically readable—to travel on an airplane, open a bank account or take advantage of myriad government services such as Social Security. "I think this is an example (of) when security and privacy go hand in hand," the Homeland Security chief said in a half-hour speech at George Washington University. "It is a win-win for both." The importance of such documents was magnified by a recent announcement, Chertoff said. Federal authorities reported that they had made more than 1,200 arrests related to immigration violations and unmasked criminal organizations stealing and trafficking in genuine birth certificates and Social Security cards belonging to U.S. citizens.

"Do you think your privacy is better protected if someone can walk around with phony docs with your name and your Social Security number, or is your privacy better protected if you have the confidence that the identification relied upon is in fact reliable and uniquely tied to a single individual?" Chertoff asked rhetorically. The upcoming federally approved IDs are intended to be a secure, tamperproof means of protecting Americans' identities while keeping out terrorists and other wrongdoers, Chertoff said.

The Homeland Security chief, who is nearing his two-year mark with the agency, was likely trying to quell rampant skepticism about the IDs voiced by some privacy advocates, immigrants, and other groups. Some have said they fear that the IDs are a stepping stone to a veritable police state, complete with ready surveillance of individuals. Some have argued that the idea of creating more tamperproof IDs is only a marginally better way to screen out those intent on committing terrorist acts because ID cards don't even begin to tackle a core crime prevention challenge: determining a person's unspoken intentions. State governments have also been critical of the 2008 deadline and what they have said amounts to an unfunded mandate to switch over their systems. A September study released by the National Governors Association, National Conference of State Legislatures and American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators estimated that the overhaul of their identification systems would cost states more than $11 billion over five years. The New Hampshire state legislature even considered passing a law earlier this year that would prohibit the state from complying with the federal Real ID law.

Homeland Security has yet to issue congressionally mandated recommendations for the cards, so it's unclear how, exactly, they would work. The cards must contain, at a minimum, a person's name, birth date, gender, ID number, digital portrait, address, "physical security features" to prevent tampering or counterfeiting and a "common machine-readable technology" specified by Homeland Security. A recent draft report by a DHS advisory committee advised against using radio frequency identification technology, or RFID, in tracking humans because of privacy concerns.

The purpose of Chertoff's speech was to reflect on the agency's work during the past year and to outline goals for 2007. For the past year, he focused on three major areas: immigration and border security, Hurricane Katrina recovery and a foiled terrorism plot originating from London in August. Conspicuously absent was any mention of the department's cybersecurity plans. After more than a year of delay, Chertoff hired Gregory Garcia, who had been working as a vice president at the Information Technology Association of America lobby group, as the department's first assistant secretary for cybersecurity. That step came after the department had sustained repeated bashing of its efforts in that realm from members of Congress.

EPA Library Closures Could Threaten Public Health

From an article by Leslie Burger in the New York Times

Congress needs to act now to reverse the EPA's closing of tax-payer funded libraries, which contain potentially life-saving information about our environment. If you needed to find out how much pollution an industrial plant in your neighborhood was spewing, or what toxic chemicals were in a local river, where would you go? Until recently, you could discover the answer at one of the Environmental Protection Agency's 29 libraries. But now the EPA has obstructed the American public—as well as its own scientists and staff—by starting to dismantle its crown jewel, the national system of regional EPA libraries. Until now, any citizen could consult these resources, which include information on things like siting incinerators, storing toxic waste, and uncovering links between asthma and car exhaust. EPA staff members and other scientists have counted on the libraries to support their work. First responders and other state and local government officials have used EPA information to protect communities. In the age of terrorism, when the safety of our food and water supply, the uninterrupted flow of energy and, indeed, so much about our environment has become a matter of national security, it seems particularly dangerous to take steps that would hinder our emergency preparedness.

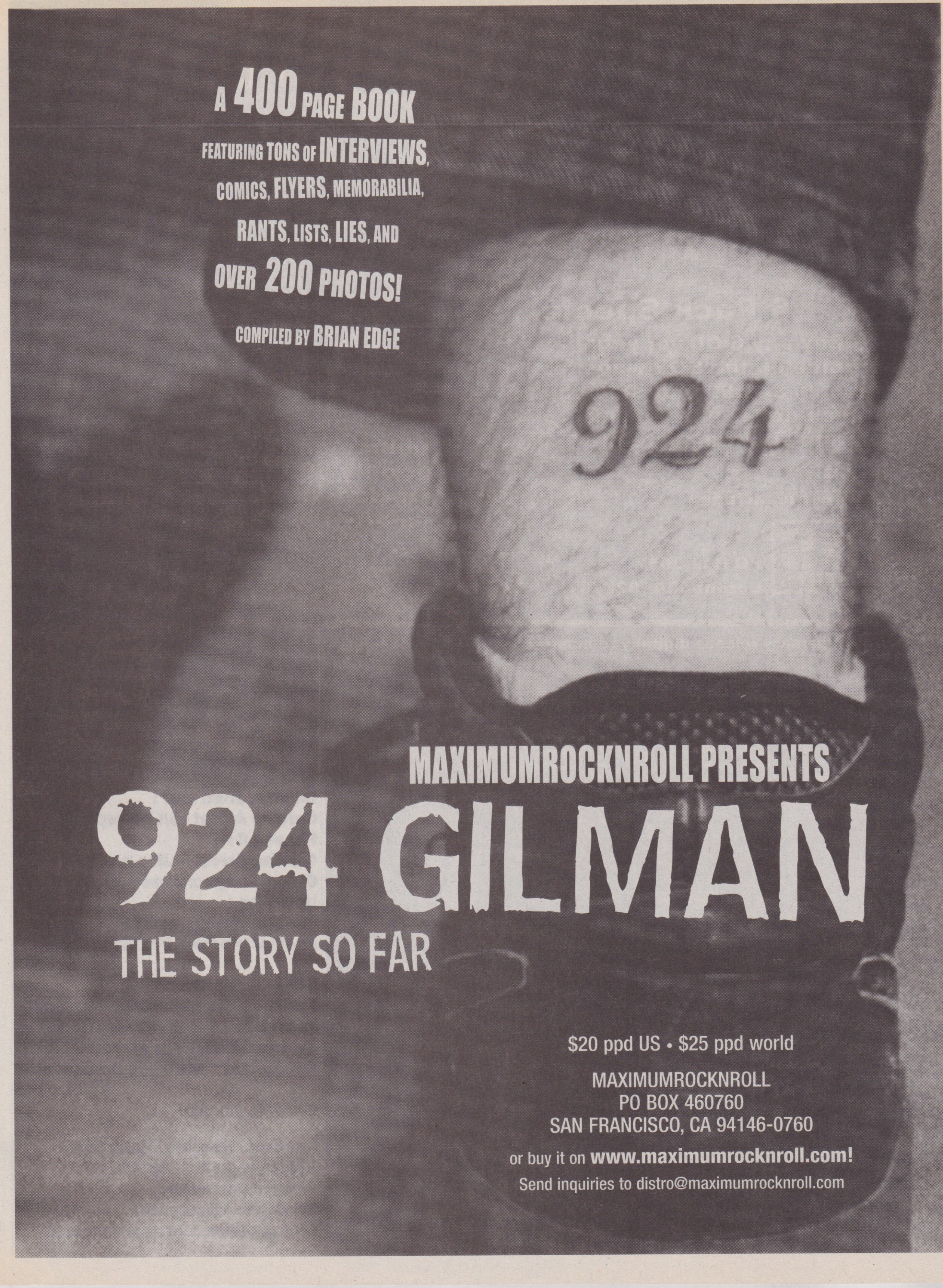
Although lawmakers haven't yet agreed to President Bush's proposed 2007 budget, which includes $2 million in cuts to the agency's library system, the head of the EPA has already instituted cuts. The agency's main library in Washington has been closed to the public, and regional EPA libraries in Chicago, Dallas and Kansas City, Mo., have been closed altogether. At the Boston, New York, San Francisco and Seattle branches, hours and public access have been reduced. Anyone who needs to understand the environmental impact of, say, living downwind or downstream from a new nuclear power plant, or the long-term public health impact of Hurricane Katrina, cannot afford to find the doors barred to potentially lifesaving information. But neither can the rest of us, whose daily lives and choices will be affected by global warming. We all have a right to be able to get access to information about our air, water and soil.

"Libraries and their professionals are integral to the work of EPA toxicologists," says an agency toxicologist, Suzanne Wuerthele. "Without access to their expertise and extensive collections, it will be difficult to explain to the public, to state agencies, industry and to the courts how and why EPA is protecting the environment over time."

Some members of Congress have begun to bring these cuts to light. The Senate minority whip, Richard Durbin, urged the president to reopen the libraries and rethink his budget request. Eighteen senators sent a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee asking it to make the EPA keep the libraries open. Representatives John Dingell, Bart Gordon and Henry Waxman recently had the Government Accountability Office start an inquiry into the closings and requested that the EPA administrator, Stephen Johnson, cease the destruction of library materials immediately.

The EPA cannot hide behind the fig leaf of fiscal responsibility. While the agency says the closings are all part of a commitment to modernize and digitize, we are not assured that its public plan is adequate or its skills sufficient. Users within the EPA and the American public need information specialists, like librarians, to manage paper collections and to help them get access to digital material and organize online info.

Fortunately, there's still time to reverse this dangerous threat to a healthy future. The administration could immediately reopen the closed libraries. Congress could conduct oversight hearings to reverse these decisions and prevent any more EPA libraries—all of them containing invaluable information about our environment, all of them paid for by our tax dollars—from closing. The American public deserves no less.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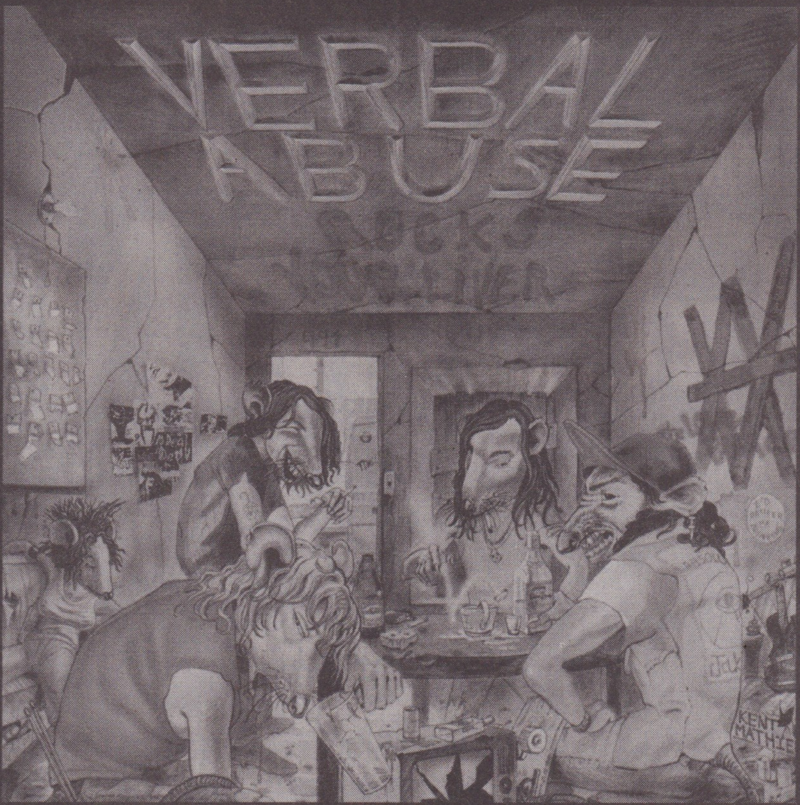

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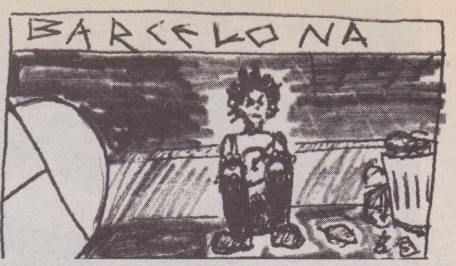


It's been more than a year since I started writing this scene report. A lot of things have changed around, a lot of new bands, and a few bands that are not together since then. Life has also changed and the way things work here keep changing every day, even my view on the scene and on certain bands, but I'll try and just cover the basic information.

I don't really know where to start; a lot of people out there probably don't have too much of idea on what's going on here. During the past few years we've experienced a rise in bands, labels, and records being released. To cover the whole scene would be something close to impossible, so I'll just stick to the DIY bands I like best or think are interesting to cover, or just the ones I feel like talking about…

For anyone who doesn't know already, E150 is not around anymore. They called it quits two years ago. They were *the* band people would think of when talking about contemporary Barcelona punk, and they have been greatly missed. When a good band breaks up, however, a lot of time the people will go on and start new good bands. E150 brought us GULAG, KISSIN COUSINS, and HZERO.

GULAG is the youngest of the three, and has Abraham (E150 's voice) singing. They are one of those bands that came from nowhere—in a certain way—and make everyone go berserk at their shows. They sound like a mix of BLACK FLAG and BORN AGAINST. Mid-tempo punk that sounds fucking pissed as hell. They have already recorded and will release a ten-inch whenever they have money.

HZERO on the other hand started while E150 was still around, and has been playing for some years now. They released their first seven-inch on Mindless Mutant in the beginning of 2004, and a split seven-inch with DISCARGA at the end of 2005. The songs on the

HZERO

split are more complex, have a better song structure, and are catchier. They are recording for a seven-inch, which will come out on Sell Our Souls. Keep an eye out for them because they fucking rip! Contact them at cruelhumana@hotmail.com

KISSIN COUSINS has also an E150 member but play a somewhat different style of punk, more focused on the rock than the hardcore, which in this case is not bad at all. They could be compared to POISON IDEA or NEW BOMB TURKS. It's fast and catchy. They have a split seven-inch with CHINGALEROS from Madrid that you can still get. It's on Sell Our Souls records. They will be doing a split with the CLOROX GIRLS also on SOS records. Contact them at kissincousinsfc@gmail.com

OTAN is my favorite band. They are the perfect blend of fast, aggressive punk—anarchists singing anarchist lyrics and great friends. OTAN will not play at a show where alcohol is sold; so seeing them play is rare. They recently released a seven-inch on Mindless Mutant that is a masterpiece of sheer desperation and rage.

The last years there has been a D-beat explosion (aka *nuclear attack*), and one of these bands is HORRÖR. HORRÖR has released an EP plus a split seven-inch with RAISER. They recently toured Europe and are amazing to watch live. Their members have another band, SIBERIA, and sometimes during a show they'll switch instruments and play their own brand of thrashy guerrilla d-beat. They have a self-released EP of noisy hardcore. Both bands can be reached at vivo_en_un_horror@hotmail.com

INVASIÓN are a not so new band that released a demo a year ago, and have played four shows since they started. They have gone through two drummers, each of which quit the band, but plan to record sometime next year. They play noisy hardcore that could be compared to early '80s Finnish or Japanese bands.

FIRMEZA 10 is an amazing noise not music trio (drums, guitar and vocals). Think of WRETCHED or EU'S ARSE. D-beat drumming, distorted feedback sloppy guitar and female pissed vocals make up one of the greatest bands of the moment. They already recorded what will be a demo tape.

There is also a great new band that totally rips and caught us all off guard! ÜBER released a demo tape in the beginning of 2006, and only need to add the vocals to their new recording, which will probably be a seven-inch. They play fast and snotty hardcore, like many bands do nowadays, but, hey, they have a truly original sound. Comparing them would be both easy and difficult, because they could perfectly fit in the *Flex your Head*/DC category but like all of those bands, they sound different from the rest.

"We are not a girl band, we are a punk band!" are the only lyrics to one of TENSIÓN's songs, a band that has played only three times so far. Four friends who are not trying to start a girl band although it's all girls; they just want to play dirty basic punk with simple direct and sincere lyrics. They are great, and I can't wait to hear what will be their demo. I guess they could be compared to ULTIMO RESORTE, but we still need to hear more! Contact this band at gwenxd@homail.com

Two of the members of TENSIÓN also play in NADA, who has not played a show yet, but is already talking about recording. It's pretty basic, mid-tempo punk that sounds melodic and dark, with lyrics about not fitting in and alienation. Definitely something new in this shitty city. Contact them at menudaputamierda@gmail.com

PATATAS FRITAS POR EL CULO is the most extreme band I've had the pleasure to watch live. They all played naked, the bassist or guitar player, can't remember now, had one of those long Spanish loads of bread hanging from his penis, the singer was wearing a ballet tutu, and after jumping all around he cracked his head and bled a lot. It was all very impressive. Music wise they reminded me of RUIDO DE RABIA, or TORTURA SISTEMATIKA, sloppy, *ultrafast* drumming that is about to come apart. Contact them at constanciouslee@hotmail.com

CINDER is the only band (together with E150) that has toured the US (at least within the DIY-scene). They play punk-ish *youthcrew* that every day sounds more *youthcrew* than punk. They have often been compared to LIFES HALT. They have a bunch of seven-inches and splits on Sell Our Souls, and will release an LP soon. Contact them at cinderkids@hotmail.com

HOLOCAUST IN YOUR HEAD released an LP last year and play—as they call it—*crust n roll*. Not sure if that is the most appropriate label for a band, not sure if anyone should use this as a label, but to give you an idea, they sound like various Swedish

SIBERIA

crust bands with a touch of TRAGEDY, and more Scandinavian-esque punk rock riffs. They are really talented musicians so expect some high level production for a new epic millennium crust record. Contact them at holocaustinyourhead@hotmail.com

OUT COME THE WOLVES is the new band everyone talks about, either because they hate them or because they love them. They did a demo tape that sounds like SHARK ATTACK or early Boston bands with a *youthcrew* (early sloppy YOT, not later BOLD) touch. They released a seven-inch on Sell Our Souls, and recorded for a new split seven-inch.

Although not really from Barcelona LA PERRA DE LAS NIEVES deserve a place just for the great demo they recorded. Sounds like old Spanish or Brazilian, Finnish-influenced hardcore, like a not so sloppy ULTIMO GOBIERNO or OLHO SECO. Unfortunately, they already broke up!

AFGANISTAN YE YE'S is not from Barcelona either from La Roca, a small town half an hour north of the city. They are older than the average punks. They have been around for a while, and very active, putting up shows or playing bands, like BUDELLAM. They are really fun to watch. They have a split ten-inch out and are putting out new stuff some time this year.

EFFORT is a youth crew band who plays for only 10 minutes but are apparently pretty intense. They released a pro-demo CD on Cycle Records. You can contact them at mikelthetruth@hotmail.com

For some reason split records are very popular nowadays in Barcelona, and ATEH and DISUNDEAD seem to like them. They just did one together. ATEH play some kind of anarcho crust, while DISUNDEAD play MOTÖRHEAD riffs and d-beat. They also have a split with HUMAN BASTARD.

Speaking of HUMAN BASTARD, after a number of EPs and splits, they are recording sometime soon for their first LP. I don't know who is putting that out, but I recommend you to check their latest EP on La Vida es un Mus. You can contact them at humanbastards@yahoo.es

On the raw side of hardcore we also have SUKO DE NABO, which translates in English to "juice out of the cock" (aka semen). They play great, bad d-beat that could be compared to some other sloppy noisy D-beat band.

Speaking of raw, ANTI PASMA plays hardcore like it was meant to be played. You like KAAOS, right? You will like ANTI PASMA; it's very simple, like their music. Fast aggressive hardcore that could pass for some old Finnish band or maybe a RUIDO DE RABIA demo. I don't know what their plans are, but I hope they record before they learn how to tune their instruments. Contact them at antipasma@hotmail.com

TOTALICKERS is a punk band from Barcelona, and they play crust punk. They just released an LP and a split 7" with KARNVAPEN ATTACK, and will release a split 7" with BAD TASTE from Mallorca. You can contact them at kremonrecords@hotmail.com

E.HONDA is a band that has already broke up. They have a demo tape out, and play fast as fuck sloppy hardcore that comes close to power violence. Members of this band have another called MEUQUES DE BARRI (that's Catalan for "*sluts from the hood*"), and sound like pissed hc ala NEGATIVE FX with female vocals—great stuff!

LEADERSHIT are members of EKKAIA and play *millennium epic crust* with a death metal influence from what I have heard. They have an LP on TRABUC Records and toured Europe recently. Contact them at nihilistcrust@hotmail.com

There's a bunch of other bands that I either do not like, or don't know enough to talk about them, or just not feel like talking about them. So if you're interested, I'm sure all these bands have a Myspace page as almost all the bands here do for some reason: NO II CHANCE, TAKE THE RISK, CAZA DE BRUJAS, ONCE UPON A TIME, HABITACIÓN 101, RABIA POSITIVA, KAKO, ESKUPE, MORDAZAS, NO CONFORME, ULTIMO REBUZNO, KARTÓN D VINO, PRIMATES, AVOID NOTES, TERRORRISMO SONORO and probably a bunch I'm forgetting about...*sorry*!

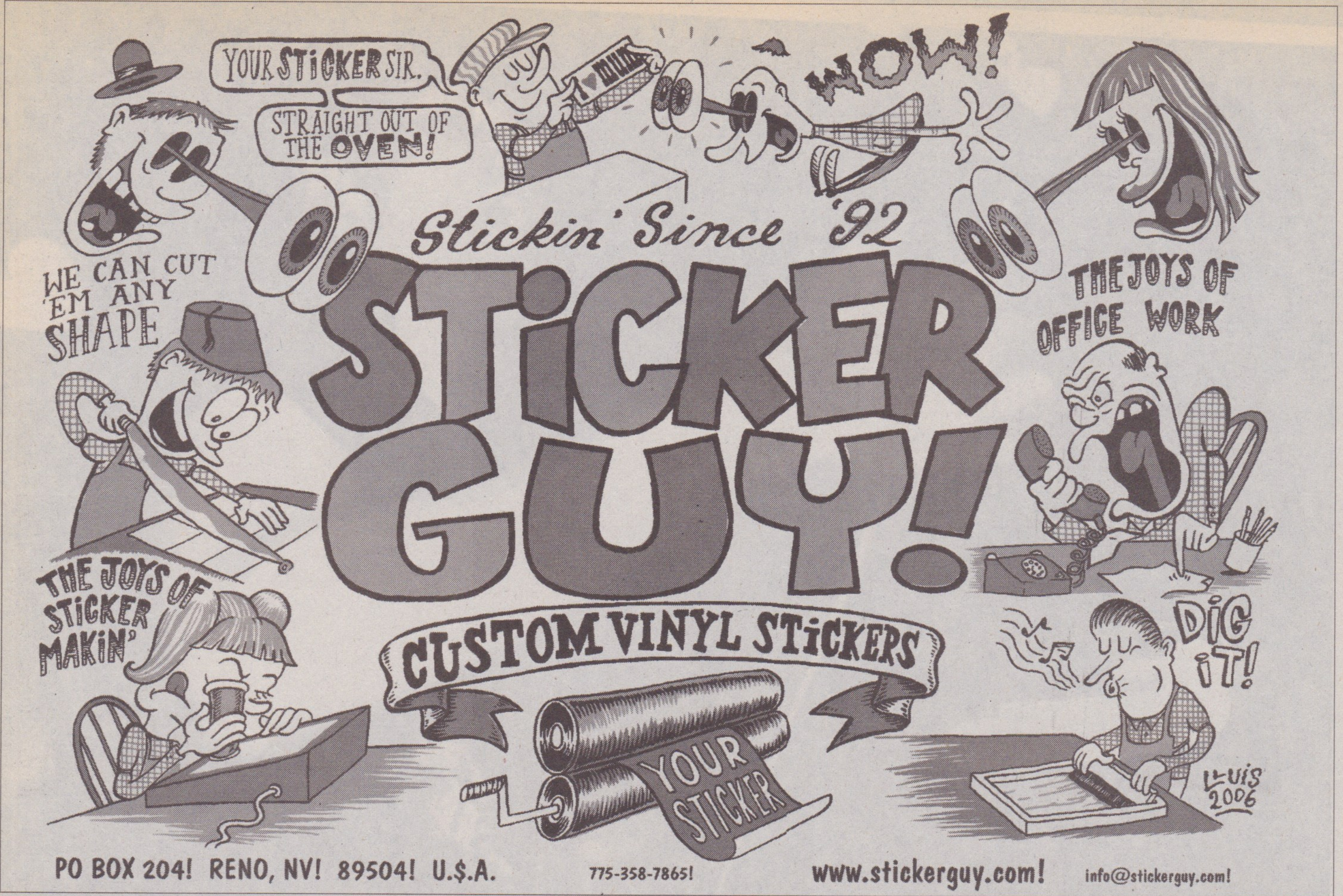
There are also a few labels worth checking out, although the only label putting out stuff that I enjoy would be Sell Our Souls (www.selloursouls.com). They started by releasing *youthcrew* stuff, but have since widened their horizons during the past few years, and are releasing some quality punk and hardcore. Great people too!

There are also a bunch of labels that will co-release anything produced by their friends, so a bunch of records are released by the same labels, including Kremon (www.kremonrecords.cjb.net) and Grita o Muere (http://www.espai.org/gritaomuere). There is also Cycle Records putting out melodic hardcore or *youthcrew* (www.barcelonahardcore.com).

Mindless Mutant used to have the biggest and best distro in Barcelona, and released some very good and some not so good punk records, but apparently just decided to quit.

So I guess that's it for now. Until the next scene report…

—Guille



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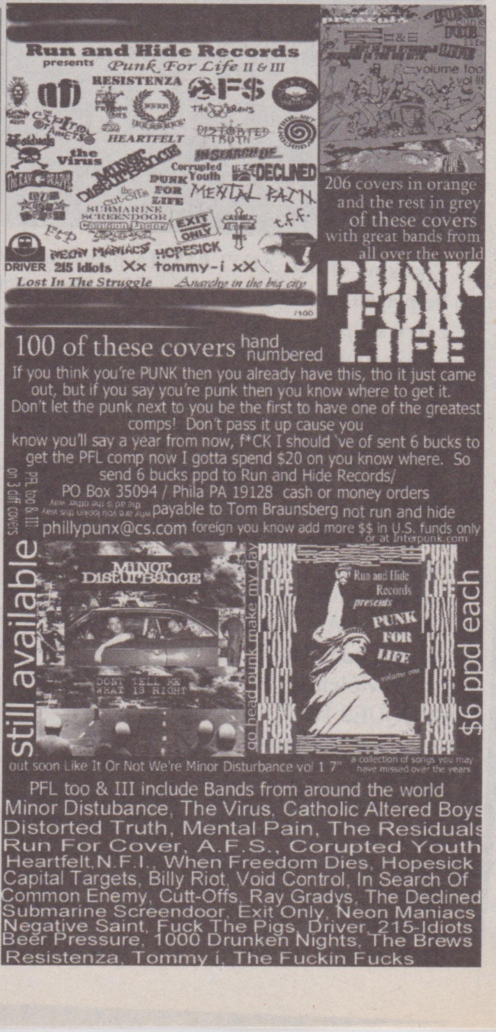

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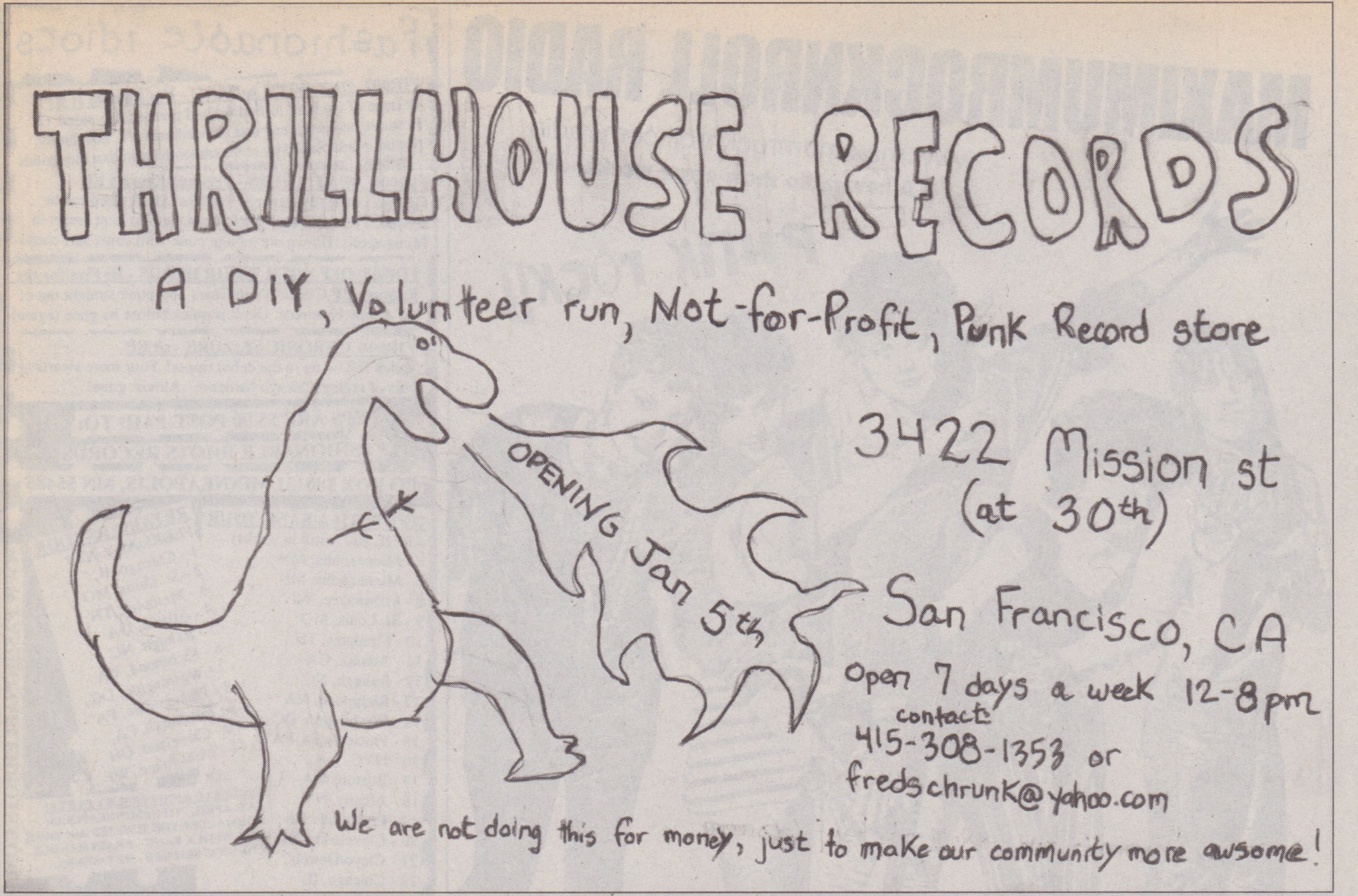
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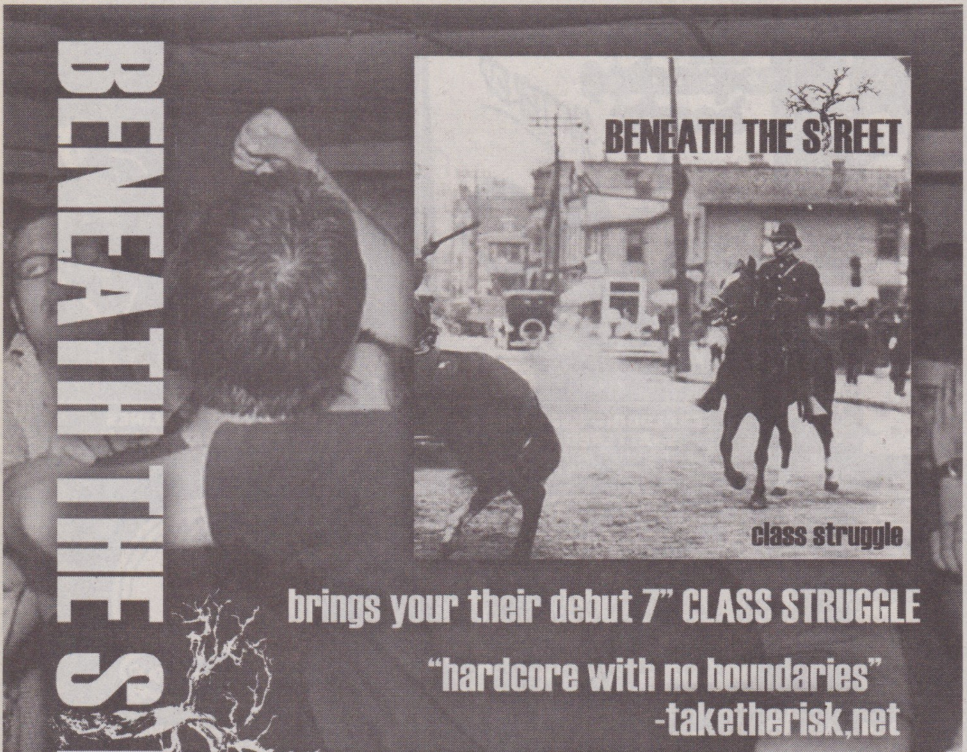
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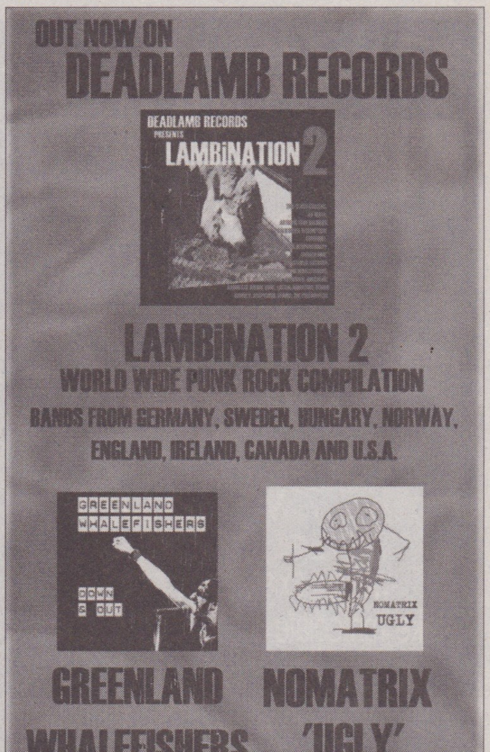
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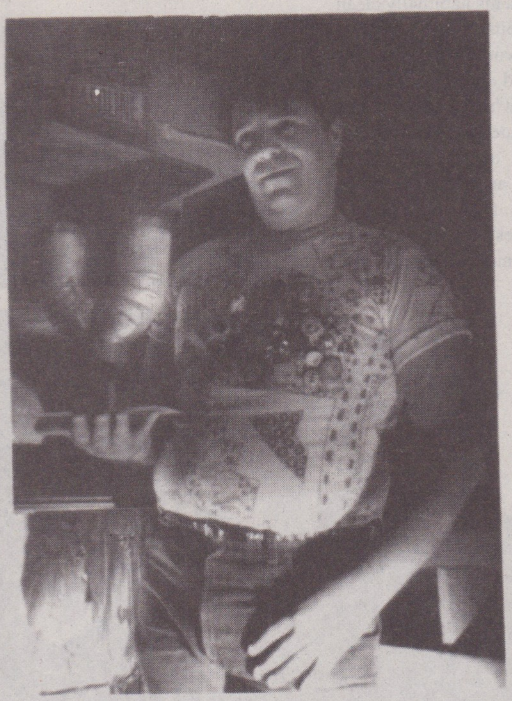
BEAT HEART BEAT

A Look at the Art and Death of RANDY BISCUIT TURNER

BY DAVID ENSMINGER

No one knows where you come from or knows your name, so you decide to step into the limelight and shine like a berserk disco ball. Suddenly, like Benjamin Franklin's press on fire, the world becomes inundated with your blitzkrieg media rampage of flyers and poster art. I do these missives to make your beanie propeller spin in no wind, laugh energy being used like a solar panel to power the absurd! I wish to see your eyes twirl like kaleidoscopic pinwheels like those wagon wheels on TV that spin backwards. You catch more flies with a cat turd than you do with a rose. The main motives in making posters is to give correct concert info and mainly to make you cock your head like an inquisitive animal and wonder what is this new delicious dog biscuit? In a dream, I once had dinner with Salvador Dali, Peter Max, Captain Beefheart, Maxfield Parrish, and Alexander Calder. They each touched me on the heart and said strange words. There and then, I knew what to do! Buy new paintbrushes and order pie for everyone! I don't know why I was chosen to wield a pen and scissors as a sword. I thank the stars and mystics for my place among the planets. Forever show the golden way and never let your pen be controlled by darkness. There is no light in the cave to see rainbows.

—Randy "Biscuit" Turner



As Biscuit's drummer in the Texas Biscuit Bombs (also known variously as the Slurpees and Biscuit's Texas Bombs…long story), his editor at *Left of the Dial*, and close friend, I tried for seven years to make Biscuit a part of the YouTube-loaded punk milieu in a way that celebrated his punk-funk hero days in the Big Boys but also dived into the dayglo jukebox of his colorful living memory, including stints with Cargo Cult, Swine King, and Areola 54. The 'Bombs would regularly try to "jam econo" on thickly buttered soul music, weird saboteur art rock, Southern gator-bellied boogie, and pithy punk rock classics. I still believe he was one of the last Merry Pranksters, wide-eyed beatniks, and original punk rockers to guide us from era to era. Right before he died, I spoke with him. He was reassuring, optimistic, and invigorated, even after the terrible swimming pool electrocution of our mutual friend Dixon Coulbourn, whose zine *Idle Time* had been an important staple of the early 1980s Austin punk and hardcore scene. So, when a former student called to tell me that Biscuit died at home with broken glass, vomit, and torn packages of antacids around him, I was floored, bewildered, and angry. An entire generation of artists and punks never came to grips with his full identity before he slipped from us.

When I was a lanky teenager who wore bandanas tied around my ankles and a Circle Jerks shirt that infuriated my starched-collar science teacher, a few guys older than me asked me to play drums

in a factory that housed spare parts for pinball machines. John, the guitarist, made me a tape of *Lullabies Help the Brain Grow*. It was weird, thin-sounding stuff, not really hardcore in the cropped-haired, choleric, pummeling, power-chord macho sense, but not totally whacked anti-rock 'n' roll a la the Butthole Surfers either, whose first record my brother loved. A year later, after scrounging through a sales bin at Apple Tree records, I found a copy of the Big Boys' last record. This was the band I was waiting for: a hybrid blend of saucy and snazzy soul, early hip hop/late disco, deviant punk, nutty mutant new wave, melody-based hardcore—you name it. It was as if they were a zealous embodiment of *Sandinista* by the Clash, re-made and re-imagined by goofy-looking Texans, abbreviated to one album instead of three. I simply can't forget the live Flipside videos of "Brick Wall" and "History" that I rented from the Rotation Station (a skating rink) skate shop: The Big Boys guys were a meld of everything boundless and inspiring about new music.

Randy "Biscuit" Turner, along with handful of others like Gary Floyd (The Dicks, Black Kali Ma), rose above the often-clichéd, chiseled-down, sweat-fueled hardcore and the silly trapdoors of punk rock to create a new rock 'n' roll species. Floyd melded the front porch soul search of Lightin' Hopkins and Howlin' Wolf with a ragged, even obnoxious punk underbelly, while Biscuit threw his towel towards a kind of soaring punk that incorporated funk that was as much Tina Turner live at Carnegie Hall as it was early Sly and the Family Stone—the band he once saw as a young man after hitching a ride to Dallas from Gladewater, TX (note: the one band from the era he said really made him feverish was Moving Sidewalks, a pre-ZZ Top incarnation that supposedly blew the Doors off stage). Both Biscuit and Floyd were almost ten years older than many of their peers, both were able to avoid Vietnam (Biscuit insisted he swallowed bits of aluminum foil and told the man behind the desk, "I ain't gonna carry your fucking gun!"), and both came from rural, redneck East Texas, to which Biscuit always returned for art shows and visits with family. This separated them from the pretense of New York's and LA's punk circles, and it also distanced them from the "red diaper" babies of Austin and the city's leftover cosmic and outlaw cowboys.

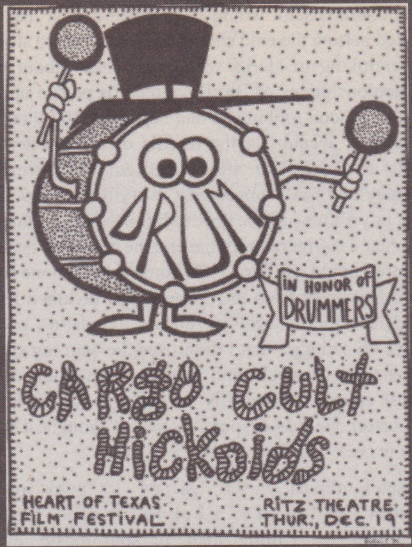
It was as if Biscuit belonged nowhere, but this is because Biscuit belonged everywhere. Jimmy Alvarado penned a notable tribute in *Razorcake* that revealed the nuances of Biscuit: "If the Big Boys embodied the punk ethos, Biscuit embodied the free-form artistic anarchy that was at the Big Boys' core…The photos collected in the *Skinny Elvis* and *Fat Elvis* CDs show a variety of stage personas—psychotic clown, mummy, harried housewife, nut-job in a straitjacket—all of which serving the dual purpose of being still another creative outlet and a sly way of challenging punk's 'rules'…He was a supremely charismatic frontman able to alternately croon like a bluesy, male Ana Gabriel, or howl like he'd ingested razorblades with a flaming rubbing alcohol chaser."

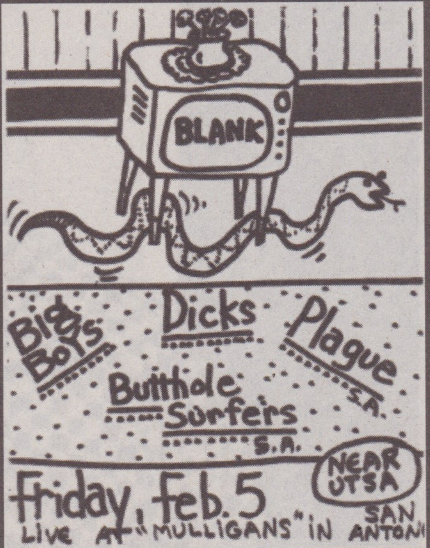
I like to believe that Biscuit took cues from the Bags and the Weirdos, or Kurt Schwitters and Warhol's factory, or from horror and mondo B-movies, or from H.R. Puf'n'stuf, but I'll let you do some guesswork too. To be sure, Biscuit churned out fliers for his bands the Big Boys and Cargo Cult like he was throwing candy in the wind, readymade to get caught on flypaper, and his work ethic was borderline obsessive-compulsive. On any given night, he could be found straddling Xerox machines down the street, or working on collages in his habitually clean kitchen counter with oddball bits of toys, sparkle, glue, and scissors until dusk would blink over his blue bottle tree in the side yard and Vespa leaning lazily out back. His flier work, which represents just a portion of his collection, melded raw, cartoonish, child-like naiveté (just check out the Big Boys poodle-fucking poster) with an acute eye for 1970s Parliament/Funkadelic records (loud splashes of color, organic amateurish lines, loose text), sly skate trends (turning nothing into something), and slash-and-burn punk rock bravado that turned disposable ruckus into freeze-frame expression and insight, not to mention a basic buoyant surrealism. Until the end, he was trying to introduce his newfangled "Battleship Texas" skateboard to Thrasher (don't forget, the Big Boys were the first punk band to have an official skateboard created for them, by local Dallas maker Zorlac) and dreaming of being featured in Juxtapoz. Plus, he was creating cut-and-paste posters for bands he never even met. Unlike the morbid decay and apocalypse of Pushead, the dark humor and nihilism of Raymond Pettibon, or the iconic leather 'n' chain skullduggery of Shawn Kerri, Turner's fliers evoke bombastic, feverish, squirmy, and irreverent Do-It-Yourself qualities, even if it's bumpy or imperfect. That was his vision of punk, for he did not revel in the gory underbelly or the compressed narratives of alienation.

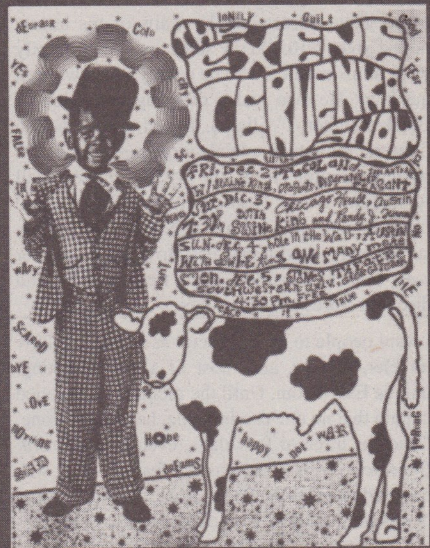
Biscuit's fliers feel like an event unfolding in front of a viewer's eyes and are very kinetic, as if they are a referendum on having fun. Like traditional handmade "instant art," they embody the notion of being quirky, urgent, and primitive on one hand, and zealously detailed and committed to aesthetic on the other. Biscuit reminded *Artcore* fanzine that "flyer art and posters are now a big musical business. I enjoy seeing wonderful offset press production runs, but I think I enjoy homemade, Do-It-Yourself at a copy center better. So much of the new posters all look the same to me. Boring. I'm not saying mine's any better, I just wish I saw more of what I enjoy!" I agree with Biscuit's notion that the crudeness, the human touch, the unconscious nod to art history (from Dada to comics), and the copy machine wit and rebellion still retain potency in a time when flier art has become increasingly

Photos on far right: Cargo Cult- both by Ben Desoto

All flyers on this page by Biscuit







mechanized, homogenized, neutered, and diluted. The Internet bulletin boards and small Adobe Illustrator-manufactured handbills just can't compete with markers and pens anymore than they can with brushstrokes and torn and melded paper collages.

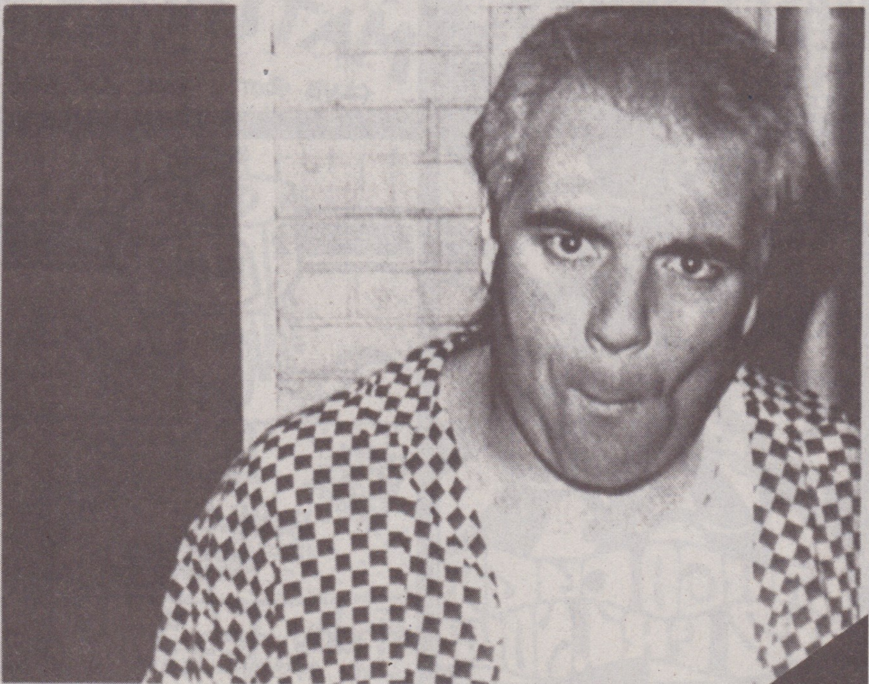
In his last interview, he described his early childhood experience with art to the *Austin Chronicle*: "I remember my third-grade art teacher looked me right in the eye and told me I had promise as an artist. I guess even at that time I saw things a little different than everyone else. Then in sixth grade I had a wonderful art teacher who took me under her wing and encouraged the heck out of me. So, believe it or not, while growing up in a little 4,000-person town, I had some incredible encouragement by artistic adults who were trapped in that ugly little nightmare of a school system, but were very, very good at what they did." Exene Cervenka was a longtime friend who often stopped by his house on tour and would join Randy in scavenger hunts at the disheveled, humidity-caked, last-call thrift store near Austin's airport, where Randy would toss piles of dirty, banged-up dolls and garish muumuus into his plastic cart. She referred to Biscuit's house as the best gallery in Austin. Yet, due to plain, old-fashioned modesty, Biscuit always made sure that people understood that he didn't make art in a cultural vacuum, since he revered poster artists like locals Guy Juke, Kerry Awn, Steve Marsh, and Gilbert Shelton.

When I was interviewing Ian MacKaye several years ago, telling him about my punk flier show called Visual Vitriol, he said, "Get a hold of Biscuit. That guy would send me envelopes stuffed with fliers." A contributor to the on-line Texas punk page finally emailed me Biscuit's phone number, and I consider myself lucky to have spent so much time with him. Biscuit lived in a house literally stuffed with assemblage pieces: eye-gobbling, wonky-colored, silly, chaotic, and plastic-tassel art that echoes his computer shunning, mostly self-taught, neo-Luddite approach. At the time I met him, he told me he had only sold four pieces, and if I remember correctly, he wanted to get most of those pieces back. After his death, a gallery auction of the same work, in addition to many others once decorating the walls of his house, netted over $10,000 in sales, which promptly went to his mother, who he deeply loved without question. He also had a dizzying collection of Black Panther TV lights, boxed plastic action figures, miniature metal airplanes, boxes of posters ranging from the 1970s concert hall Armadillo World Headquarters to Emo's, and other intense pop culture ephemera (including, surprisingly, an original Big Boys studio master reel) that he hoarded from flea markets and discount stores over the years.

I want people to know Biscuit as a friend, fellow traveler, mentor, and most of all, a rollicking, unique East Texan. Until the moment he groaned in pain that no one can imagine, he was all alone. Dead for three to four days, even as the *Austin Chronicle*, with Biscuit as the feature story, was dropped near his mailbox. It was not quick, and it was not painless. Ironically, Big Boys records are fetching gargantuan prices online, yet Biscuit himself could have used that money to stay alive. I am sure Biscuit would have loved it, just like he loved getting the cold shoulder at local record stores after joking to clerks with blank faces about the ridiculous prices of Big Boys records posted up on walls. Biscuit told me he had negative $16.00 in his checking account in the middle of the sweltering 2005 summer. Even after the Biscuit Bombs made money and gave him almost everything, he would not buy all his pills he needed but instead bought his mother a refrigerator. In the end, he was the best son a mom could ask for… It's ironic that a phone was two feet away from the place he last breathed hard and fast, that a local musician's foundation could have helped him, that I didn't see the warning signs over the past weeks and months. I am haunted by those episodes, especially the last time we talked in Houston. He was desperately sick. I thought it was his nerves.

Biscuit almost never listened to punk rock. Instead, he'd listen to a Rob Halford solo record, Spiritualized, Killing Joke, or soul music, even zappy '80s dance music. Sure, he loved being part of "Raul's Class of 1978" at the Austin Music Awards and hamming it up as the Austin roller derby announcer, but people seemed to neglect his last musical adventures. Ironically, the Biscuit Bombs toured England, smelled the ghosts of the Beatles and the Sex Pistols, and Biscuit jumped around with seaside mohicans in seaport Boston, or went thrift store hunting in the hometown of Discharge (Stoke-on-Trent), and played to 800 skateboarders madly dashing around an indoor warehouse, but only 20 people showed up in Austin at the 710 Room the last time we played, even after a blurb in the paper. Yet, tons of people showed up at his memorial service. It was simply too little, too late. Biscuit—my wife and I, and many others, miss and love you. Shake that moneymaker in dayglo heaven. These fliers are your footprints.

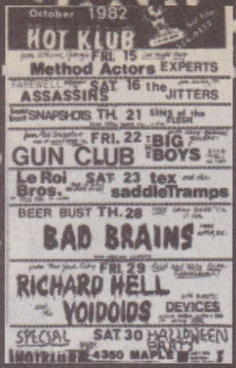
Biscuit personally donated many of these images to Left of the Dial magazine, though some are being seen for the first time. He would be thrilled to know that Maximum has given them more exposure. Visit http://www.biscuitfest.org for information on Biscuit and not-for-profit activities related to him. Also, visit Ben Desoto on the web at: http://www.myspace.com/zendfoto.

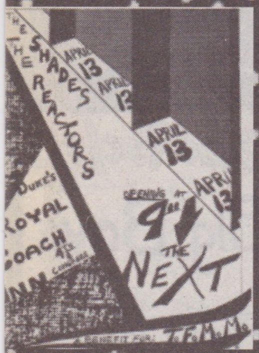


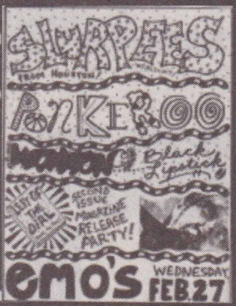
Clockwise: Texas Bombs cd cover and flyer by Biscuit, Biscuit himself

Above, left and right: Big Boys- photos by Ben Desoto

Raul's- photo by Ben Desoto

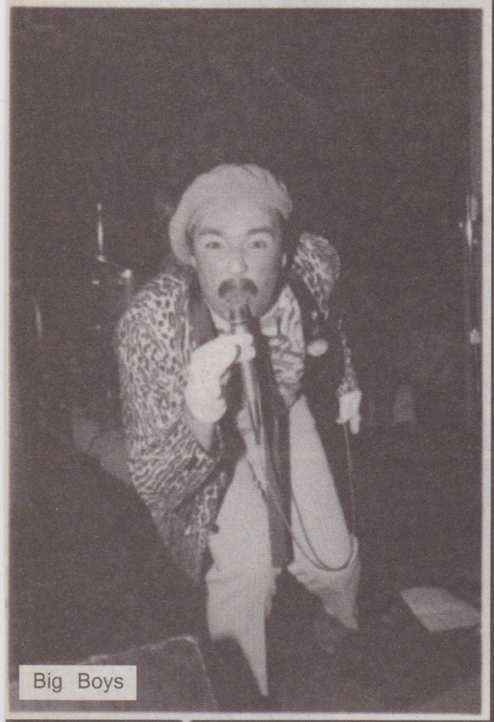






Big Boys

Big Boys


Big Boys

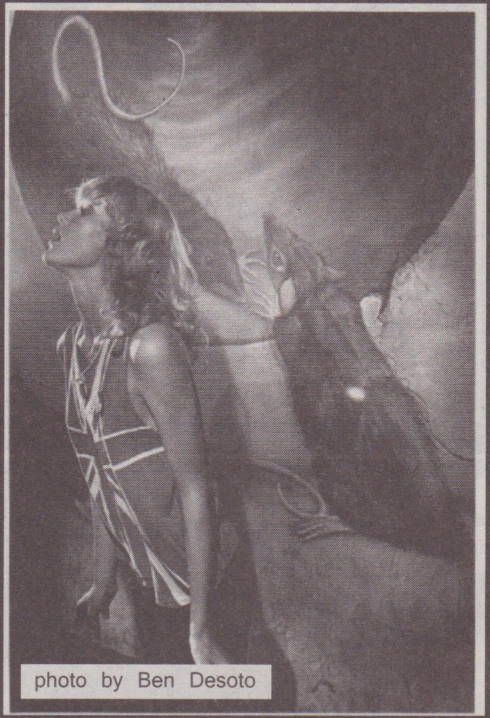
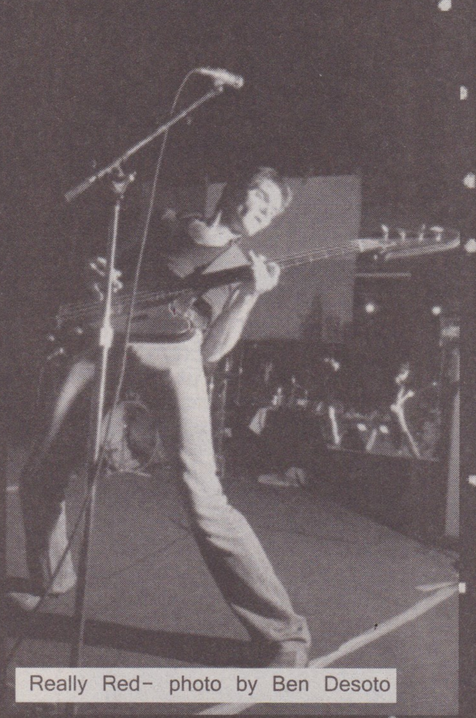


photo by Ben Desoto


Really Red- photo by Ben Desoto

Left and right: Big Boys- photos by Ben Desoto

"The Flies of Texas Are Upon You"

by Randy Turner

Originally published in *Left of the Dial*

I careen from the dullest sheen of a broken butter knife to the glistening layered edge of a fresh razorblade. That's how much punk rock kicked me square in the butt.

In 1978, Austin was a sinkhole of cosmic cowboy has-beens and puffy hairdo rock 'n' roll reruns that were in dire need of purging. The Exlax ingested was a movement called New Wave/Punk that came along and dumped all prior bowel movements! Yow! Something new was alive and electric in the air. The Ramones, the Police, Roxy Music, Joan Jett and the Runaways, and Joe Jackson all playing at Armadillo Headquarters were a kaleidoscopic peek at things to come.

In late '78, early '79, I was going with my friend Buck Davis to weirdo shows and to see him play bass in a band called the Violators. We saw the Skunks, the Skyscrapers, Eddie and in the Inm8's, and the Body Snatchers and knew that this was the fresh breath I needed! It was all pretty snotty rock 'n' roll with "smack normal society in the head" lyrics. I went to the New Wave Battle of the Bands on 6th St. in 1978 and realized what with Chatterbox from San Antonio, the Hates from Houston, and the Nervebreakers from Dallas there was lots of stuff going on Texas-wide. The Sex Pistols even chose two Texas dates to play on their ill-fated American tour, but I'm sorry to say that I didn't make the thoroughly deranged San Antonio show. All my friends in attendance said the concert photos didn't lie; it was a near-riot!

In early 1979, we were going to New Wave Mondays at a weird little conjunto on "the drag" near 26th St., which some crazy Spanish outlaws ran. The place was Raul's, soon to be the holy grail of Texas punkdom. They started having new wave nights and since the burgeoning populace at the University of Texas right across the street was getting bit by the new music bug, lots of "alternatives" showed up and bought many kegs of beer! Joseph Gonzales, Bobby Morales, and the secretive Raul himself said more nights should be dedicated to this new wave thing because the money's good and change is on the wind. This decision opened the floodgate for so many new bands. A great club with just the right improper décor and rat-like ambience located 50 feet from UT. What fun to come!

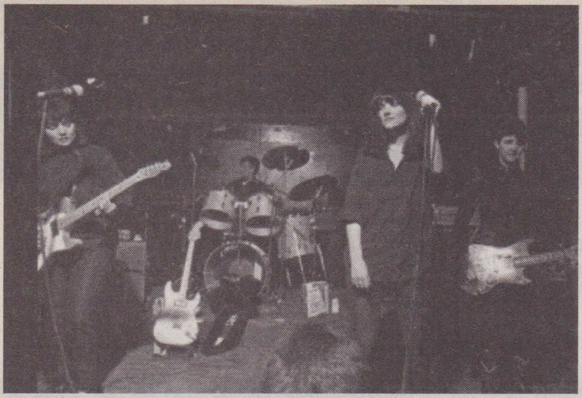
Every night for a while you could go see four or five bands on the same bill for $2 or $3. Granted, some were depressingly horrific, but that was overridden by the friendship factor. "Wake up America, we dress weird and we act weird and we're not leaving. We play shitty, act shitty, and couldn't care less what the proper attitude should be. Move over 'cosmic cowboy!'" To be amongst 200-300 like-minded artists was such a refreshing time in all of our lives. For some of this crowd, this movement was a tongue-in-cheek attitude as many were pampered college kids, but at least the ideas for new art adventures did exist. Many of my friends truly were the social outcasts and reveled in the anarchistic lifestyle. They played the straight razor games at night and packed the scabs the next day at their sleazy cook jobs.

Big Boys

The first time I met Joseph Gonzales, the manager of Raul's, I had on a huge Christmas tree court jester outfit that I had won the Carnival Brassaliero costume contest an hour earlier at another club. We laughed so hard at my absurdity and daring and immediately became 'core buddies.' He was cool as heck and I always admired him as a mentor and friend. Ten months later, I was appearing live on his stage with the Big Boys as the second show of our career happened at Raul's in November of 1979 with five songs from our own menu. Thanks to Joseph and to all you cohorts who believed in the fact that Austin had opened up an entirely new kind of Christmas package!

We Big Boys were hideous musicians at first but grew to be mediocre, so I just say we did progress! We joined the growing throng of bands, artists, poets, and slackers who made Raul's their home. The music was the main drawing card but the good times in the parking lot, the poster art jams, the illicit gluing up of said posters, the peppermint schnapps chugging contests, the hundreds of house parties, all the budding film people and writers surrounding me all made Austin so incredibly unique at that time. I was truly astounded at what my Texas peers were coming up with.

The Huns were a very popular and totally bizarre lot of a band and looked forward to by all. The Huns bust at Raul's was a milestone for the Texas scene as it got national publicity in Rolling Stone and other national publications. Seems like an Austin cop who had wandered into Raul's objected to being kissed by Phil Tolstead, the lead singer. The ensuing handcuffing got a tidbit out of hand, the Huns left an incredible legacy with their antics. One face I'll never forget and is seared into my memory forever is that of Dan Transmission, the 300-pound keyboardist for the Huns, with his monk outfit and a huge black and white upside down cross painted on his face. Their 45 rpm single "Glad He's Dead" about that JFK thing was quite a thorn for a while!



My Dolls- photo by Ben Desoto

Through the many months of Raul's I saw lots of great shows like the Dils and the Urinals from LA, DOA from Vancouver, Canada, the Psychedelic Furs from England (two nights at $3 each), Roky Erickson, and Black Flag. I watched Dave Edmunds, Patti Smith, and Elvis Costello all pass through the crowd. As fun as all these touring acts were, many local acts could blow away the stars on any night. People like Not For Sale, Offenders, Standing Waves, Terminal Mind, The Reactors, Millionaires, Sharon Tate's Baby, Access 88, Delinquents, 7 Systems, The Next, Radio Free Europe, and the unreal Gary Floyd and the Dicks kept the local band flame burning like a barn on fire. Really Red, MyDolls, Drug Puppies, and DRI coming from Houston, the Nervebreakers, Hugh Beaumont Experience, and Stickmen with Rayguns from Dallas, Fearless Iranians from Hell, Raging Woodies, and Bang Gang from San Antonio and the Vomit Pigs from El Paso would all come to town and just tear it up to highly appreciative whacked-out audiences. There's a great *Live at Raul's* from 1979/early 1980 with many bands from that era that documents some of the most raucous moments in Texas rock 'n' roll.

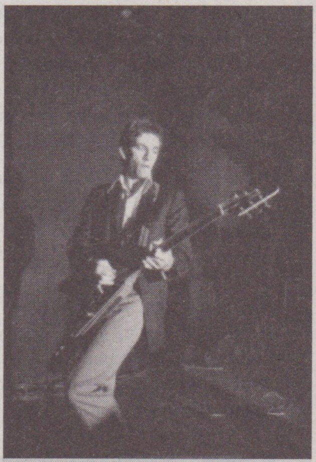
Since Raul's was right on the main strip in the University of Texas area, the fraternity boys from all the Kampus Klan houses would delight in driving by and hollering foolishness at everyone outside. One particular evening when the crowd was as huge outside as inside, the frats kept cruising by in their hot new Firebirds screaming obscenities and spraying beer and fire extinguisher juice on everyone. After their fourth "drive by" certain un-named parties lay in wait in the bushes a few yards south of Raul's with a huge cinder block! Yep, you guessed it, their last and unluckiest pass saw the cinder block go right through the front windshield! The crowd roared approval as the frats madly screeched to a halt. Uh-oh! Bad mistake! 100 punks made a beeline for the 'bird and the now newly wizened wise asses sped away just in time to miss a good ass-whuppin! This crap and abuse from the frats happened often as friends constantly related stories about how the frats beat them up, cut their hair, or verbally tortured them. It's real different today as some of the frats are so Gap-minded mall hip and have some of the dorkiest new wave hairdos alive. Store bought punky-punk, fresh from America's shopping centers!

Raul's, under Joseph Gonzales' loving hand, lasted until 1980 and made all who went there sick to know it was closing. Lots of last night free beer and champagne and revelry closed a chapter in the musically surreal scrapbook of Texas. Raul's rose from the dead for a few more months under the thumb of Steve Hayden. It did get freshly painted and cleaned up and got a new P.A. system, but somehow the essence of the magic got swept out of the backdoor with the sawdust. As much as the scene was still so eclectic and diversified, Steve put out the second *Live at Raul's* record with only the Big Boys and the Dicks on it. I was honored to get to be recorded but it caused rifts in the scene because only two bands were included, quite unlike the 10-12 bands on the first live record. I was hurt and happy at the same time, caught in the middle as it was. The last night of this Raul's saw a lot of heavily graffitied sheetrock come down and the toilet seats taken as souvenirs.

A lot of the action was then picked up by Duke's Royal Coach Inn at 4th and Congress Avenue in downtown Austin, the site of the 1960s hip psychedelic art spot called the Vulcan Gas Company. The stage was rickety, the dressing room was the three-foot wide hallway leading to the alley and you generally pissed the local barflies off with loud soundchecks at 7:00 p.m. and then drove 'em out at 10:00 p.m. when the shows began. I saw the Cramps there and the Big Boys brought the Butthole Surfers up from San Antonio for their first Austin show. Duke's was a wonderfully fun nest with Congress Ave as a backdrop. Unfortunately, things didn't last long there. I did see the Perverted Popes play there and that is abusively unreal memories enough!

Brad First, who had done a lot of the Duke's booking, started working with the people at Club Foot at 4th and Brazo's downtown. This was one of the coolest clubs I have ever been to as five levels of seating from the basement to the second story rafters made for many groovy viewing spots. They even had a nice catwalk that went up and around back of the band so you could get a great overhead panorama of the club and stage. The Big Boys were whacking out some looney tunes at that time and got to open for people like X from LA, New York's Plasmatics, Trouble Funk from DC, Flipper from Frisco, Minor Threat from DC, the Go-Go's, and the futuristic and gentle Grace Jones. 800-1,000 people shows for local acts were common as this was a scene hotspot. The Continental Club and Liberty Lunch had their fair share of shows as well during the '81-thru-'84 period. Sonic Youth at the Continental Club—thank you gods of rock'n'roll! When Soap Creek Saloon moved to South Congress Ave, they even had some fun get-togethers like "The Offenders Crazy Motorhead Attack Day." With shows happening at odd venues all across the city, I still feel some of my favorite shows were at Club Foot. I saw Roxy Music with Bryan Ferry, the dark and mysterious Stranglers, the FleshEaters, and one of my favorites, Gang of Four, there. I was in the background when they filmed "Roadie" with Meatlump! The Standing Waves got the house band part in the movie and they said Meatloaf was a sloth. Club Foot was cool enough to have a Sunday afternoon minors matinee where the underage crowd could come and rage. Rage they did as shows with The Dicks, Fang from San Francisco, Stretch Marks from Winnipeg, Canada, and Lost in Space from San Antonio made for incredibly fun Sunday afternoons. Bad thing about daytime shows is that punks don't look so good in daytime light, all clammy and pasty they is!

During all these years, events at various one-time venues happened a lot. The Big Boys were responsible for several sideline excursions like LA's Saccharine Trust, Nig Heist, Black Flag tour with



Really Red- photo B. Desoto

Biscuit and Gary Floyd

Butthole Surfers

the Dicks and the Big Boys at the American Lebanese Association's meeting hall. The hugely attended Texas Love-In was held there also with Really Red, Butthole Surfers, Dicks, Big Boys, and the Recipients from Dallas. After the Love-In, we in the clean-up crew found a purse with 54 cents and an ice pick in it! One huge show at the VFW Hall on East Saint Elmo Road (the patron saint of frivolity) started out as a big success until the toilets were kicked from the walls and water went everywhere. I was screaming from the stage "Please don't kick holes in the sheetrock and screw up another fun spot!" My friend runs up to the stage and tells me the urinals have been breached and it's Niagara Falls with turds! This made me extra mad as these were special men's urinals that had little plastic propeller inserts in the pee bowl to keep cigarettes from going down the water pipes. The propellers would spin around when you peed on them and point to different sayings! Manly Man, Stud, Wimp, Try Harder, Crybaby—all made you grunt out your last pee drops to land on something cool like King Kong or Superstar. Indeed, pleasure demised.

Downtown at Lavaca Street and 4th, a crazy underground bunker called Voltaire's Basement existed for a brief while. Its only escape hatch was one crowded stairwell that made the element of danger way more concrete. Several arts shows there deemed quite science fiction and music near voodoo rituals made this 125 degree sweatbox sticky rich with lore. One great night was with Scratch Acid when Gibby from the Butthole Surfers came from the crowd and started bitching at David Yow, Scratch Acid's lead singer. Gibby broke a fake "prop bottle" over David's head and the crowd went nuts. It was "gossip too much" for weeks afterward as David and Gibby laughed their asses off at the gullible sheep. I hope I'm not lying but I think it was also Gibby who was "birthed" through a cut in a king-size mattress that had a giant vagina spray-painted on it. Out pops Gibby strumming some ridiculous umbilical chords on his guitar! Pretty!

One other small niche in the history of Austin weird wave hot spots was Sparky's, run by my friend Lyle who now helps run Amayonia Aquariums. It was just off Justin Lane and was around 6-8 months during the early '84 season. Hot as a fresh bowl of gravy and darker than the inside of a cow it was, but shows like the Dicks (old and new), Twist Ties, Glass Eye, Not For Sale all made it another especially adventuresome spot. Once saw the rich but deranged soundman get pissed at a new microphone and throw it out the second story window. I, as a singer, went *Ding*, and ran to the parking lot to find it. I found it and still use it today. Thank you, oh thank you!

Several crazy shows were held at the old Skyline Club way out on North Lamar Boulevard near Brake Lane. This is where they say Elvis had performed before and it was a treat first to be inside to try to find Elvis' drugs or maybe a sweat stained hankie. We had a double Kung-Fu kick ass Halloween show there with many unnatural acts like Doctor's Mob, San Antonio's Marching Plague, and Big Boys performing. One of the best shows I ever saw was there with Minor Threat who 'kicked the toaster into the bathwater of normalcy' with these monstrous two-punk-buzzsaw guitar attacks. With Brian Baker moving from bass to guitar and the addition of a champion bass navigator, it was truly a punk rock Kodak moment. Whee!

After Esther's Follies moved to their new digs, there was a ton of shows at their old stomping grounds, the Ritz Theatre at 6th and Neches. America and Europe's wildest punk bands with a huge local base of party-goers made the scene inside and outside the Ritz just absolutely circus-like. Imagine Billy Bubba from Beaumont comes to town to see the Longhorns play some idiot kind of grunt ball and ending up drunk on 6th Street. He will be stared at and possibly confronted by people who he would think might have come from Mars. In all honesty, I can't remember ever seeing any fights or serious illness happening, though the Ritz may be the hottest club temperature-wise of any club I've ever been in. No fans of distinction, no AC, and pitiful ventilation made it the devil's closet. Shows there were many and as diverse as eggs at Easter. Ohio's Necros, Austin's Kamikaze Refrigerators, Austin's Happy Death, Misfits from New Jersey, Articles of Faith from Chicago, Austin's Infected made all sorts of music and art patrons show up. Jim Franklin, the intriguing and dadaistic armadillo painter/sculptor lived in the film room booth upstairs for a while, but I think the punks drove him out. He, in my eyes, is one of Austin's early true punks—the man who has vision mere mortals know not of!

Studio 29 at Rio Grande and 29th Street made a fling of it for a while in '83 to early '84. It had been Rome Inn Pizza for years where Stevie Ray Vaughn held court with his magical mystery shows (Stevie, I still love you and miss you). Now, the likes of the Buffalo Gals and Kathy McCarty and Hüsker Dü from Minneapolis doing "8 Miles High" graced the tomato paste covered linoleum floor. This is where I also saw the Butthole Surfers try to introduce the saxophone as a sex partner. Bless the owner JoAnne's little head as she was a very understanding artist who gave much of her time and energy to the scene.

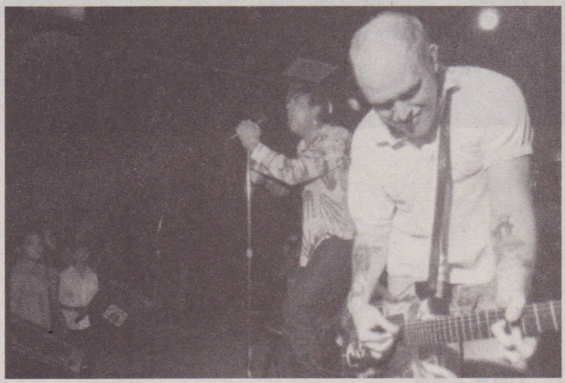
Many shows like New York's Samhain, Phoenix's Jodie Foster's Army, DC's Marginal Man, LA's X, and countless local acts at Liberty Lunch proved the movement was still hugely alive. Marc Pratt and J-Net at the Lunch were enthusiastically supportive of a maniacally artistic but wildly uncontrollable scene for years. Marc and J, those that know thank you dearly.

Through tears and fog and love and hate, this is a tiny take on my view of the New Wave/Punk rock revolution in Austin and across Texas. It is obviously incomplete so I ask you to seek out people like Margaret Moser, Randy Franklin, Cindy Melby, Rudy Hyde, and Buxf Parrot, or the Royal Hawaiian Prince who are also keepers of many wonderful stories about a very unique and exciting time in Austin's long musical history. Ask Chris Wing about how after one of a Jerry's Kids rehearsals, their "mental enhancement tablets" allowed them to form a human chain and save a drowning lady's life from the flood waters plowing down 45th Street; ask Control Rat X about his 'zine *Xyphoid Process*, which he did when he was 14 years old; ask Ty Gavin if women should be wilder; ask Terry Lord why she's so blessed with being the absolute perfect drummer; and lastly, ask the frat boy I knocked the hell out of on the dance floor at Raul's if his chin healed properly. Ha-ha!

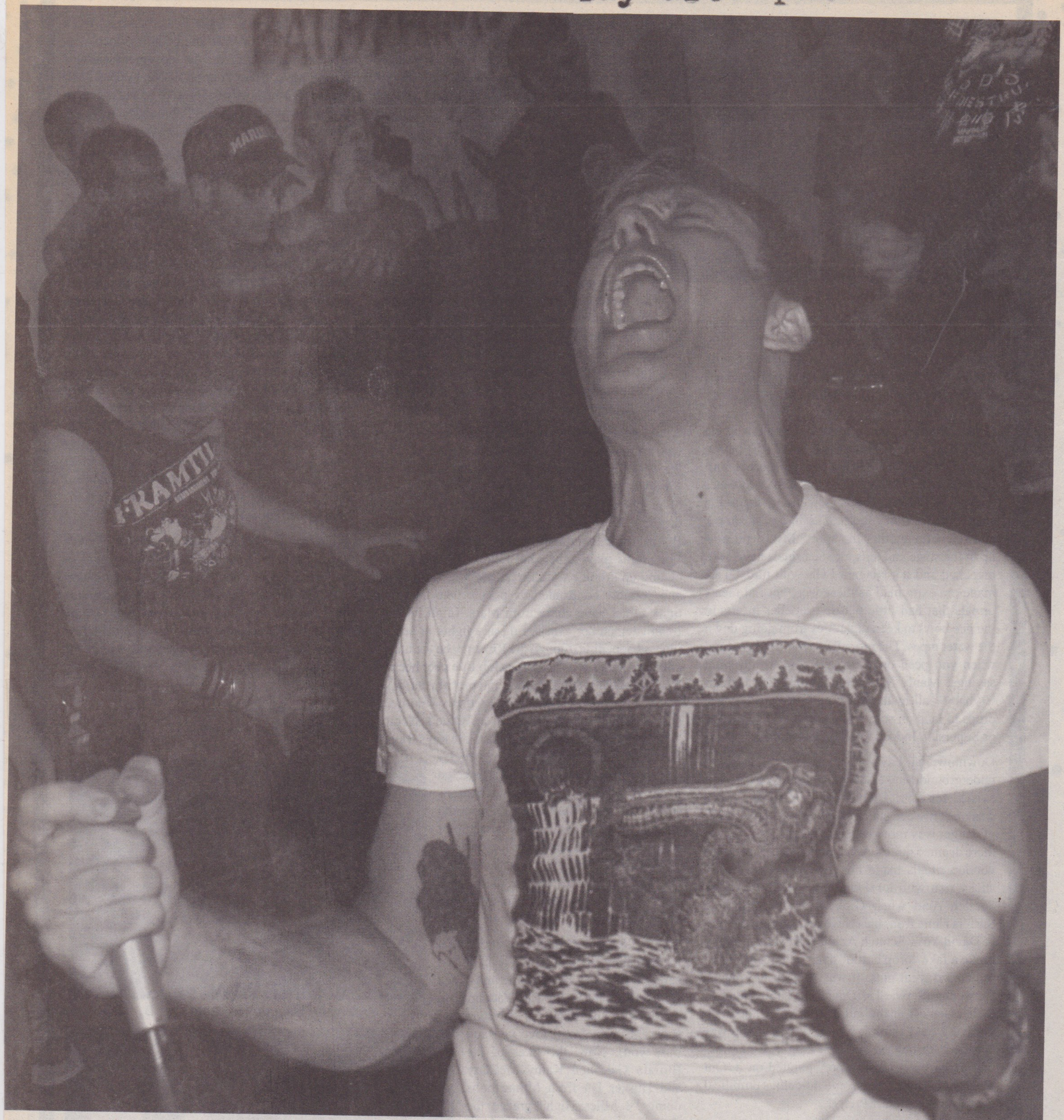
When you view old pictures of the New Wavers and punkers from back then, don't be so quick to judge harshly at what you see. What we thought was totally gear in 1979 looks like cartoons now, but your brand of grunge rock filth-fashion will look like absolute wino horror to the silver suited platinum bewigged edge rockers of 2014! Respect your roots for you too will gather mold.

Love and donuts,
Randall J. "Biscuit" Turner

Stickmen with Rayguns- photo by B. Desoto

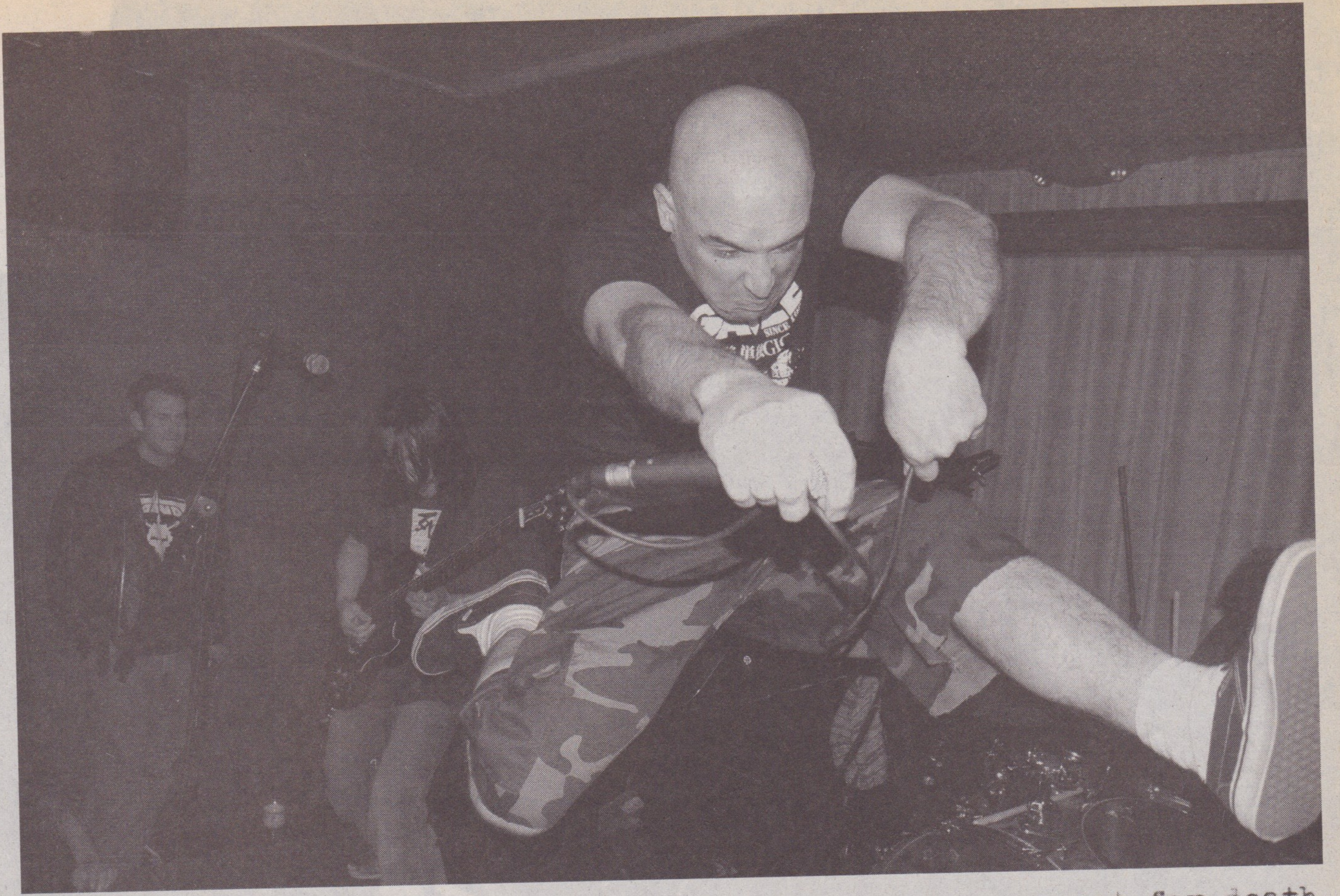


Big Boys- photo by Ben Desoto



mindless mutant

all photos:
martin sorrondeguy



conquest for death

jump off a building

Ruin is a quartet from Glasgow and Bradford in the UK who play powerful D-beat anarcho-punk with a strong and highly intelligent political bent. They have an album on MCR Records, Japan, which is distributed in the US by Sound Pollution, as well as a split single Spat Out Bleeding with Pause on Fight Records in Finland and an EP Distort/Confuse released by Putrid Filth Conspiracy in Sweden in 2006. There is also a free live recording which is available from their website at www.ruined.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk. Members of the band have played in a host of important bands over the years including Zounds, Doom, and Disaffect. I caught up with them towards the end of 2006 as they were working on their new album, which is due for release in early 2007.

Interview by Danny O'Rawe (Back2Front zine)

RUIN

MRR: Members of Ruin have all played in numerous bands over the years. Can you briefly describe some of the bands you have been in and how the band came together? Were you influenced to set up this band as a means of playing the music you like or is there a political agenda to your ideas?

Neil: With the exception of me, all members of Ruin have played in many bands. The reason Ruin came about was because I wanted to do something after the last band that Brian and me were in folded. We recruited Andy who recruited Stick and that was that. We all knew each other and the idea for the band was based on friendship and the chance to make some of the noise that we all were into. It was as basic as that-no explicit political focus or specific political drive other than the fact that we are all interested in similar socio-political issues, which have been central to our involvement with punk in the first place.

I wouldn't be in a band, however, if it wasn't political and questioning. I don't think my personal views on social and political inequality will have much impact on the big bad world but being in the band gives me another vehicle for their expression. I take what I sing about seriously. I want to discuss these issues with others, and if I can do that through Ruin, while at the same time playing the full-on punk music that I love, then all the better.

My introduction to politics came from reading tape and record liners and it has always struck me as a great way to stimulate debate and thought in what is, after all, a marginalized community. We make talk in sound bites when a song only lasts for 30 seconds, but the thought that goes into these lyrics is much more than that. Writing for Ruin helps me clarify my thoughts and expands my understanding of society and social and political inequality; maybe others take something from them-who knows. So, in short, Ruin is a band driven by music and politics but we did not set out to construct ourselves as a political instrument with a specific agenda.

MRR: Obviously the punk scene has changed everywhere over time but what are the changes you have seen in Scotland over the years both good and bad? Has the movement made a difference in the past and can it make a difference now? If so, how?

Neil: Well, when Andy left Glasgow for the sunny climes of Bradford, I decided that it was time I took my turn to organize gigs and put something more into the scene on the live level. Along with Brian, I spent about five years putting on gigs in Glasgow. In that time I saw many changes on the scene, some positive and some negative. I think everything that went on in Glasgow during that time when I was more involved in the wider issues of the scene mirrors the general scene in towns and cities all over the world: periods of enthusiasm, high turnouts at gigs, periods of great political awareness and lots of people willing to contribute, to periods when people were apparently apolitical, less than interested and totally apathetic. At the moment there are a few folks who are doing shit in Glasgow but I don't know if there is a scene or not, but then that is maybe because I am so far removed at the moment, for a variety of reasons.

In terms of Scotland, the networks remain, again sometimes more active than others but they do still exist. I think that punk has made a difference and will continue to make a difference but we are living in very different times now and I think the vehicles of social protest have changed, the nation-state focus of the punk protests of the eighties have largely been supplanted by a focus on global issues. IT potentials have also altered the ways in which punk operates, some good and some bad, which has ultimately shifted the focus of concept of punk community. However, the music and protest of the 1980s has located punk firmly in a role of political agitator and I can never see the foundations that were created then disappearing. Will punk continue to make a difference? I don't know. Does it have the potential to make a difference? Yes!

MRR: Is punk just a place for bored middle class white boys to scream their existential angst at a bunch of profiteers in the safe knowledge that nothing will ever change; where punk records are merely units of commodity for the entertainment of those who feel guilty about the world they find themselves in but feel powerless to change? Discuss.

Andy: Ok, so you're implying that punk is possibly redundant as a means for positive change within society. Was it ever feasible as a means for change? When I first got into punk, I was initially taken with only the music. It took me a couple of years to get it as far as the political side of it went but even after being converted to this new train of political thought, I never assumed for a minute that punk in itself would ever be capable of bringing about such massive change within society that would result in the kind of world we wanted to see as anarchists. I did, however, believe that political punk could serve as a catalyst for something bigger. I believed that the music, politics, and alternative ways of living could ultimately inspire people to take these ideas and develop them further and on a bigger scale. I thought and hoped that, by example, punk would create a knock-on effect that would slowly inspire or convert the majority of people in this country into abandoning capitalism, racism, religion, sexism, etc., etc. and adopting a way of life based on co-operation, respect, sharing, and equality.

Did punk ever achieve this? Besides from a few token victories (awareness of animal rights, rise in popularity of vegetarianism, etc.) I think it's fairly obvious that punk has failed to change anything in a significant way. The capitalist governments we are enslaved by have increased their grip on power and have polyfilled over any cracks once created by punk years ago.

I see the punk scene of today in the UK as a parody of its former self. Where, in the early '80s, the anarcho-punk scene was inspirational and vibrant and full of potential, it ultimately failed to achieve most of its (albeit un-clarified) objectives and we haven't learned from the mistakes of the past. A lot of the creative and inspirational people who were once involved in the punk scene have since distanced themselves and pursued other paths, leaving behind isolated pockets of punks in a few cities spread across the UK. What's left of the punk scene is ever decreasing in size and lacks the visionaries and creative people to inject new ideas, not just with music, but in ways to promote alternative lifestyles, etc. to an increasingly apathetic and indifferent general public.

Neil: What really disheartens me about so many people

involved in the scene is that it is nothing more for them than an apolitical social club, with many punks devoid of any understanding of all things punk other than getting fucked-up and listening to music. I am not trying to say that people should be rantin' anarchist or leftist beliefs and propaganda at every turn in every part of their lives. Of course punk is social and a support network and for fucks sake we all need a break from the shit that is flung at us everyday in this capitalist wonderland, but when punk becomes a parody of itself as Andy suggests and when gigs and bands exist merely as a backdrop for a party then I reckon we have taken a wrong turn.

MRR: The Patriot Act, Anti-Terror Legislation and ID Cards are just a few of the goodies US foreign policy is giving away with its Happy Meals. Although ID cards remain part of the UK's agenda, both the Whitehouse and Brussels are watching with baited breath. Is there much grass roots organization against the implementation of this system in your part of the world? The Poll Tax was brought down largely by non-payment in Scotland and eventually riots in London. Is there the solidarity to make such a protest effective again? How do you envision it?

Neil: this is a real concern for anyone who has any belief in civil liberties and human rights. The Twin Towers attack, the London bombings, the "threat" of Al Qaeda, the "new," "expanding" danger of paedophilia and sex crime have provided an excellent backdrop for the UK government to expand their campaign of misinterpretation and propaganda, and to extend state control. There is no apparent unity in resistance to ID cards. I wonder if there isn't actually a majority consensus that it is the way forward if we want to extend the protection of the "honest" citizen. The same is evident in the UK government plans to file DNA profiles of all citizens for the benefit of the nation. It's a peremptory attack on the deviant individuals lurking in our communities. The common sense beliefs of many people are driven by fear of the unknown and the government is playing on that fear, whether the terrorist or the paedophile is held to be the threat. This might seem obvious, and that a questioning of the actual role of ID cards and DNA banks would strip away the public's acceptance of governmental authority and rights, however, I think that the propaganda surrounding these issues has led to a general belief that UK citizens must forfeit certain individual and civil rights to the greater authority of the government because of the nature of the perceived threats.

MRR: Ruin's sound is best described as anthemic D-beat. Why did you choose to play this style? Do you think, if the band is a political vehicle, that you can reach a wide audience by playing, what is for many, an old fashioned idiom that has been done to death?

Andy: We chose to indulge ourselves in this particular form of punk because the four of us all loved it and it seemed like a good idea at the time. You are right, however, to note that D-beat has been done to death. We try and put our own take on a tried and tested form of music but we are, essentially, a retro band with few ideas of our own-and we don't care!

Neil: Aye, and as for reaching a wider audience, it is not a concern for us, even as a political vehicle-we are not driven by any "need" to get our ideas across to more people-if more people listen to us and what we are saying that is great, but we do not stand as punk arbiters of a new era. We will be criticized for playing D-beat to a captive audience but we are still playing! If we weren't writing any new songs, coming from different angles, discussing different topics and not playing any gigs then it would be pointless, but the fact that we are doing what we do means something, to us at least.

Brian: I agree. We endorse everything clichéd and keep flogging that same dead horse.

MRR: Where have you toured recently and what have your experiences been? I read your interview in Profane Existence in which you discussed the lack of good venues and promoters in the UK. Is it that we old timers are simply flogging a dead tofu burger or is there just no interest in punk anymore?

Neil: Because of many lifeshit issues Ruin have found it very hard to get time to tour. We have played in Belgium and Germany as well as UK, but have yet to venture out on tour. As for interest in punk, I dunno about that because there obviously is still interest from many quarters. However, lots of people on the DIY scene have been around for years, are older now and have more life issues to deal with that they didn't have when they were younger. I reckon, in the UK at least, people prioritize when it comes to gigs, which means that when an established band play there are lots of people turning up, but when it is local bands or bands that people haven't heard there is less of a turnout. I know this has always been the case but it seems more pronounced now. Maybe I am wrong; maybe folks are just more apathetic. The DIY scene in general must go out of its way to embrace the ideas and enthusiasm of younger people and the experience and dedication of older members. We must not marginalize ourselves around the structures of ageism (in any form), which are all too evident in many situations I come across now.

MRR: You make several references to the ALF in the sleeve notes to your new EP. Do you think that campaigns to bomb and kill humans who may or may not be involved in animal exploitation entirely defeats the point or do you feel acts of this nature are justified in any sense?

Andy: For me, the acts of vivisectionists whose work can be described as taking life to save life is an obviously glaring contradiction in terms. It is life itself that matters and every creature (human or animal) has a right to live their life free from harm or pain. Consequently, any taking of human life as a means of saving animal life (i.e., killing a vivisector) is subject to the same contradiction in terms as already mentioned. There is no justification for taking life

Neil: Agreed. Double standards are double standards whenever and by whoever they are employed. Direct action need not involve proactive violence, or reactive for that matter-although there is a big difference. To take lives (of humans who have been co-opted by social convention and the ideology of human dominion to carry out the actions they do) is no more than a mirroring of the attitudes, which led humanity to the acceptance of large-scale animal oppression and slaughter in the first place. Why fight the fight on the level of the oppressor where violent action merely strengthens their resolve and raises the support of wide swathes of the public who have not truly considered the position of animals in society (for the same reasons as vivisectors and experimenters)? This only

serves to alienate animal rights activism further and isolates the majority of those who would support animal activism if it was not for that reason. That is not to say that I believe in a wet, liberal view that the human oppression of animals will change through organic realization of the human-animal relationship. To destroy the structures of animal oppression will require direct action that strips the potential for capitalist vivisectors to justify their crimes in the name of medicine. We must take that struggle to a different level, on a level where animal activism cannot be undermined by common sense ideas of human dominion and benefit, but where we do not lower ourselves to the methods of the enemy. Subvert.

MRR: Animal experimentation is unequivocally pointless because animals are a different species than us. How can new life-saving drugs be formulated without trials of some sort? Do you think experimenting on humans who have committed heinous crimes, such as Bush & Blair, is a way forward or should all vegans volunteer themselves for research in order to prevent cruelty to animals?

Neil: I saw your interview in the last copy of *Back2Front* with Peter Singer, the dangerous philosopher. It's a great starting point for this debate. Firstly, I fully agree that there is little point of medical testing on animals, no matter the figures that are produced to show the benefits of animal testing. Most supporters of animal experimentation are aware of animal suffering but can negate the effects of this suffering on their humanity by arguing for the physiological similarities between humans and animals and the absence of conceptual potentials of animals (the idea that animals have no understanding of their life or circumstances other than daily requirements of food and shelter). If we follow on from this understanding and justification then it is obvious that people with no conception of future should be open to the experimental processes of biomedicine (I ignore experimentation for purely cosmetic issues as there can, in my opinion, be no arguable justification for such experimentation). If we extend these ideas we can argue that humans without the mental capacity to understand their circumstances should be the focus for experimentation, because they have human physiology and therefore are entirely representative of the physical human make-up and because, like animals, they have not conception of the future. I am not saying that we should experiment on such humans, but that our contemporary justifications for animal experimentation would suggest that this is the way forward.

If we are to continue medical experimentation into human disease and illness, surely we must locate humans at the centre of the experimentation process. Experimentation on humans, however, must be completely voluntary, fully-informed, and without undue inducement. We cannot simply replace animals with humans who have no voice. Experimental benefits has the potential to motivate humans and in particular those with serious or terminal illness to take part in experimental research. In fact, should humans not have the right to access experimental drugs and treatment when they have a seriously disabling or terminal condition? At the moment potentially beneficial drugs are being held back because of lack of evidence that that the results of animal experimentation can be mapped on to the human body.

If we truly want to understand human disease we must focus our study on the human body and particularly in the bodies that are "diseased." This does not mean that biomedicine should have carte blanche to carry out any type of human experimentation and that strict guidelines (such as the Nuremberg Code) should not be extended for individuals' protection, but such an experimental model has far greater potential than the current focus on animal experimentation. For me, the future of medical research and advancement lies in the abolition of all animal research and the extension of stem cell research and voluntary human experimentation (within a framework of bioethical protection and equality of access to potential treatment).

MRR: It's cool to see some informative notes with your records. How important is it to produce information like this? Do you feel that there is an information war going on and what can individuals do to make themselves more informed? Can a source of alternative information such as Indy media be totally unbiased?

Neil: Like I said already, I see liner notes as a great way of communicating ideas. It is often difficult to get across ideas of any depth in songs and I feel that people should at least have access to a deeper explanation of what I am singing about. I agree, however, that sources of alternative information can never be truly unbiased and that control of information "manufactures consent." This raises two issues: 1) should it attempt to be balanced when it is a counteractive approach to mainstream propaganda; and 2) are we trying to inform or reveal an ultimate truth that justifies our approach and demands acceptance? Counterculture media is a means by which to disturb the truths of the mass media. The mass media relies on the belief that their readers or viewers are mere sponges, blindly accepting. Are we so elitist as to mirror their beliefs? Communication, propaganda, call it what you want, but we are involved in a knowledge war at every turn.

MRR: Since devolution there appears to be a greater swing towards Scottish independence. Are you for this or does it mean little to you at the end of the day?

Neil: At the end of the day it is of little importance in the wider scheme of things. There will be advantages and disadvantages to Scotland's citizens but they will largely come about because of practi-

cal issues in relation to Scotland's demographics rather than any issue of national identity or polity. I can't say that it is a major concern for me.

MRR: One of the messages I took from punk is that it's possible to overcome obstacles by doing it yourself but in this day in age that becomes harder because it's never been so easy to have everything done for you. Government makes laws for us without asking us and starts wars despite any opposition we may offer to it. Do you think it's possible to be so optimistic in these days and reclaim your mind and body or are we all going to be eventually overwhelmed by the wonderful world of Disney?

Brian: The government has always made laws despite public opposition, that's what they do.

They make decisions on economic factors and the population as a whole can fucking shove it. This is why the three seconds of action in the ballot box for me is a sign of consent to let them have this hold over us. It's difficult to be optimistic in such negative climates, for example the failures of the Anti-Gulf war demonstrations and little or no resistance to the ID policies trying to get pushed through the front door (there's no need to sneak it through the back; we give them our full and embracing consent).

There are, however, reasons to be optimistic at least on the micro scale if not the macro. What I am talking about are people that hold similar beliefs to myself and try to encompass in their lives as much is physically possible. Being vegetarian, anti-racist, and anti-sexist and generally questioning things rather than just blatantly accepting them. This in turn has passed on to those punks who I know who have had children, who are probably some of the best socially and mentally balanced kids I have ever met.

I've probably went totally off the plot, but what I am trying to say is that, whether you are a punk or not, it is still possible, as much as you can to live your life out with the norms of society that have been neatly tied and classified for us. Granted, it is impossible to escape state, government, or economic control completely but challenging their power is a start. That, I know, will never leave me and I will pass down to any future generations. Disney will only overcome your mind and soul if you let it.

MRR: I've asked a number of people in interview over the years about their thoughts on the situation in Palestine. What does it mean to you? Do you accept that US foreign policy is directly responsible for the wave of bombings since 9 /11?

Andy: I think the Palestine situation is more complicated than simply putting it down to US foreign policy and I think a basic history of the region (now known as Israel) is essential to understand the situation. Yes, the state of Israel was primarily created by US foreign policy at the end of WWII, displacing Palestinian people to make way for the influx of Jewish people but Britain also played a large part in the creation of Israel as it was Britain who "governed" the region pre WWII and Palestine was, ultimately, part of the Great British empire. Also, although the Jewish people were terribly persecuted by the Nazis during WWII, they have been operating a system of apartheid against the Palestinian people since the creation of Israel, learning no lessons from their own peoples suffering in WWII.

US foreign policy has always propped up and backed the Israeli government and funded it's military operations against Palestinian forces which, undoubtedly has fuelled hatred against the US in most of the Islamic world but especially in the Middle East where resentment has always been higher since the creation of Israel. The US and other European countries have been interfering in the affairs of Middle Eastern countries for decades as, of course, it's one of the largest oil-producing regions in the world.

MRR: You promote the flying of the black flag and describe yourselves as anarchists. Do you follow the lines of traditional anarchism such as Bakunin or Goldman, or what does it mean for you? Is it a spent theory?

Neil: Firstly, is any theory ever a spent theory? Anarchist theories disturb and undermine truths that are held to be evident in contemporary society. Just because the anarchist movement has been marginalized and has seen explicit affiliation diminish, can we really argue that anarchism as a political philosophy is worthless or that the anarchist threat to structural inequality is over?

Perhaps it is fairer to say that the potential for large scale anarchist revolution or communal action has lessened and that anarchism has entered a phase where the ideological dynamics have changed to reflect the increasing individualism evident in contemporary Western society. As far as anarchist theorists are concerned, I find their writings fascinating and while I might not agree with a great deal of what is argued under the broad banner of anarchism. I am obviously influenced by the material I read and the ideas I encounter through engaging with anarchist theory and practice.

I first became interested in anarchism as a young punk but this was a reflection of the views I had already developed as thirteen or fourteen year old on how the world operated and how the poor were continually exploited although my understanding of anarchism and political philosophy was primitive. I always had the feeling that there was more to learn, more to understand and that is what has continued to be a motive force for me, at a personal level. I would describe myself as an anarchist because of my core beliefs but I

would never align myself to anything other than a loosely based definition of anarchism, one that is collective and supportive, focused on community and not based on neatly defined, constrictive frameworks of anarchist "rules" and "method." However, the anarchist ideas evident in the work of political theorists such as Marx (the ideological and political limitations of Marxism notwithstanding), Bakunin, and Kropotkin have been big influences on the way I see the world, as well as the more contemporary work of Michel Foucault, Peter Singer, Tom Regan, and Noam Chomsky.

By engaging with the ideas of others we all build our understanding of socio-political relations; the people who influence the way we think in all aspects of life are the people from where we draw our inspiration, but that is not to say that we all have to have the same ideas or motives as each other, other than a general consensus that state control, exploitation, and inequality must be destroyed wherever possible. To that end, anarchist theory has influenced and continues to influence my beliefs and actions but so does the ideas and discussion that take place continually on the punk scene and in wider society.

We can frame our understanding of the world and all its fuck-ups in the thoughts of others. It is easy. All the rules are in place. Or, we can use these ideas to question all the shit that surrounds us daily. For me anarchist theory is fascinating and expands my understanding of socio-political relations, but what is far more important is the political beliefs and actions of those around us. Too many people make heroes out of people they see as encapsulating all their own ideas in flat-pack form-it's nothing more than slipping into an ideological straight jacket. We all need to think for ourselves, inspiration informs, but shouldn't be seen as a prescription for life. Then again, that is only my worldview!

MRR: Do you find that some fanzines ask really dumb or really safe questions in their interviews with bands, and in a way that is why punk never evolves?

Neil: I don't think it is just fanzines that are the problem here. Too many people see punk as little more than some good music and a way in which they can disappear from their other lifeshit. Punk is a closed community that has excluded outsiders to the benefit of no one. Yes, we all like to rattle on about all the shit going on in the world, we all like to argue how fucked-up the war on terror is, we all like to scream for change but at the end of the day how many people want to actually see any change that disturbs their comfortable ideas of "punk life." I take part in a few online forums and it never ceases to amaze me how much we all seem desperate to agree with each other over political issues. We have created a sanitised movement that is, by and large, of little threat to anyone, never mind the core structures of social oppression and exploitation. If your idea of punk is listening to apolitical bands extolling the virtues of anarchy, freedom, getting wasted and "fucking the system" without caring one way or another if it all makes a difference, then fair enough-but it is not mine. That doesn't mean I think that we shouldn't enjoy ourselves in punk, that is ludicrous. I play in Ruin because I love the music but that is only part of why I am a punk. When punk becomes nothing more than a leisure pursuit, what does it all mean?

MRR: If you were offered a major label deal that means you could make a livelihood from your music would you take it? What do you say about the bands that have gone down that route?

Brian: I'm sick and tired of all the bands that pretended to be DIY and then jumped on the major label thing as soon as they got tired of riding on the back of DIY. Chumbawamba, Blaggers ITA are just two examples of a long list of arseholes that treated us like a commodity to bounce into superstardom and "spread their message." I laugh heartedly when they get dumped by the label six months later.

I use Fugazi as an example of a band who uses DIY ethics as a platform and as an example that bands can still become popular (not that Ruin or D-Beat ever will) without the need for major label backing. Whether you like Fugazi or not, you cannot deny their commitment to keep their band DIY.

Neil: Not that anyone would offer us a major label deal being the bland post-photogenic fuckers that we are, but if it were to none of us would spend a second considering it. The music industry is bullshit, built on exploitation and greed-the product, the people, the values and the reality is all bullshit. Those from the DIY scene who have been co-opted can argue all they want about wider audience shit and how times have changed-the reality is that they bought in and became part of everything they once stood against.

MRR: Last points?

Neil: Cheers for taking the time and putting in the effort, Danny. Thanks Golnar. Anyone interested in talking to us or listening to us should get in touch through the website or at ruined@blueyonder.co.uk. Stick's answers are somewhere in cyberspace, probably never to be read, due to computer fuck-up.

Anyone interested in in-depth DIY political punk zines should have a look at Danny's zine *Back2Front*. You won't be disappointed. Contact him at danny@yahoo.co.uk for info.

RIOT THIS

I first heard of Riot This when they had the gumption to email me out of nowhere asking to play some shows together. I wrote them back asserting that when I was able to—I would hook them up. That opportunity came when Mig needed another band for his Sunday night Punk Rock Matinee at the Knitting Factory in Hollywood. Riot This opened the show and blew everyone away. We were very surprised, not because they were all gals but because (tell the truth everyone…) you always have low expectations when hearing a band for the first time. I was sorely mistaken. You could tell they had passion for the music, played well and didn't really give a fuck. The last part is always a bonus, especially if the band is great. They already had a group of dedicated fans and instantly had wonderful circle pit filled with boys and girls. They passed the lyric test, writing interesting, thought-provoking lyrics. It is my pleasure to introduce you to Riot This.

Interview and introduction by Renae Bryant.
Photos by Smigma Productions

Liz Sanchez: Vocals
Fernando: Guitar
Celeste: Drums
(Bass player who joined after this interview: Yuko Maeshima

MRR: Riot This is a relatively young and new band. Give the readers as much history as you have.

Liz: Riot This started out in late November 2004. It pretty much started with Celeste in her garage playing on her drums and yelling at me to play my guitar, so she could have something to play to. Then ideas starting exploding and riffs started building. We both started sharing the ideas about people and bands that inspired us. We found out that we had a lot in common. Celeste and I wrote a few songs and then started asking around for friends who wanted to join. Then we put out an ad out for a vocalist. After everything came together we started out as an all female, four piece group. Each of us came from previous individual punk bands, but each of us wanted something more challenging and effective. A few us of grew up listening to bands from the "Riot Grrrl Revolution." It had a huge effect on us and gave us inspiration as women to do what other women in the scene were doing. We started writing, playing, and catching attention here in the Southern California scene. After some time, some members decided to choose another path for their lives. Celeste and I decided to keep the band going because we know it's the right path for us. So that's when a good friend of mine came into the picture. Fernando and I played together in a band called "The Feud" and remained close friends after the falling out of the band. Naturally, after figuring out all the kinks, I gave him a call and he was in. Now we're exploding in the scene, ready to make a difference, and to rock out at the same time. Soon we should have some new members joining us.

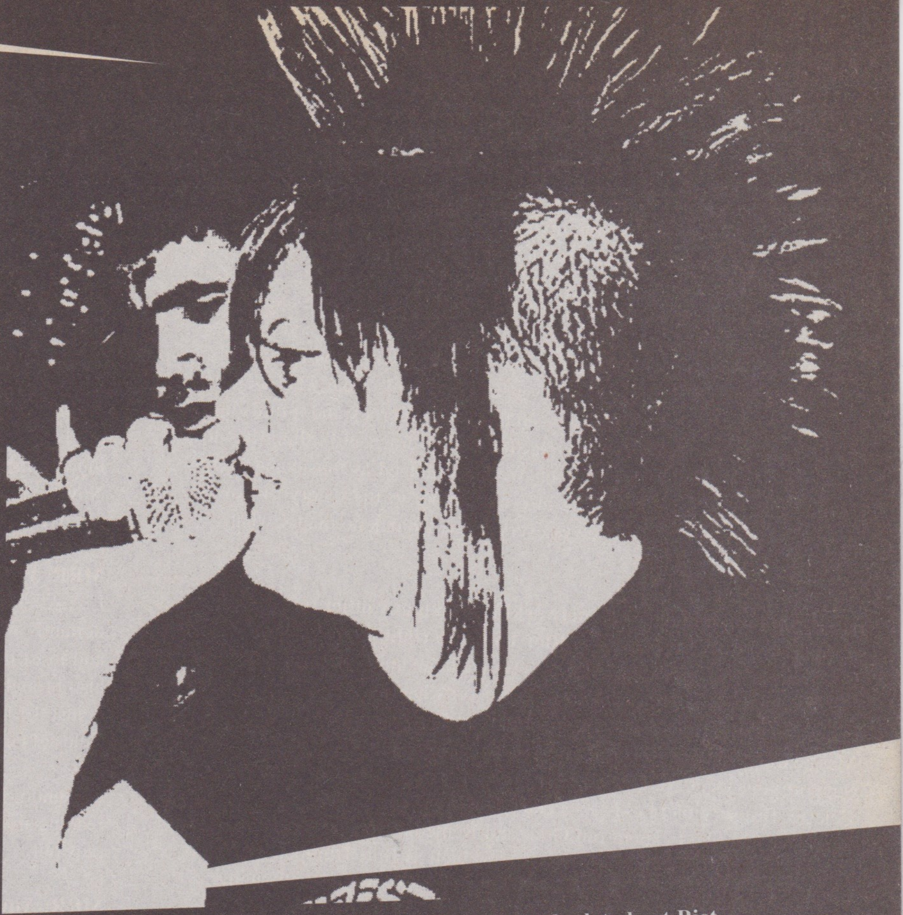
Fernando: I remember rocking out to Riot This at many shows before I was even close to being a part of it. The one thing I can say, this band has staying power.

MRR: You did go through a line-up change since you release your EP. Liz, how did you go vocals?

Liz: In my first band we did a Bikini Kill cover, and of course I sang. After the recording of it everybody was encouraging me to sing more. Even when we put Riot This together people were still saying I should be lead vocalist, but I was having a blast just playing the guitar. When we had our falling out with our first vocalist I just took it as a sign. I decided to do it. Now I can't get enough of it.

MRR: Did your former singer write the lyrics or did someone else? You've been working on new songs. Where are you coming from lyrically with these new songs?

Liz: I'm a writer. I love to write, so I wrote pretty much all the lyrics except for "Machine of Birth." Celeste wrote that song and did a great job. So now I go to her whenever I have writers block. Basically, when we first started out a lot of the lyrics came from where I felt we still stand as women in society today. I believe we still have to prove ourselves on a day-to-day basis with men, but now my writing has gone beyond that. Now it's become about being human in today's society and dealing with social/economic classes, racism, and sexism…just plain fighting for our rights. We can't fight a system when we concentrate so much on fighting each other. Slang these days doesn't help either. Apparently nigga, bitch, and gay don't mean anything bad anymore. I guess I'm out of the loop. Please sense the sarcasm in that.



MRR: When I first read your band description it talked a lot about Riot Grrrl and feminism. How did you come to know Riot Grrrl? How did you become a feminist?

Liz: It definitely started with the music. Bands like Bikini Kill, Sleater-Kinney, and Bratmobile are what caught my attention and opened the door to a whole new world to me. Reading *Ms.* Magazine and books by bell hooks & Estelle B. Freedman built the inspiration more. I think when I started playing in bands that's when I became more of a feminist because finally I got to say what I felt as a woman.

Celeste: For me it was the music also. Feminist art is what caught my attention, from artist like Barbara Kruger, Imogen Cuttingham, and Frida Kahlo. The art inspired me to create ideas, motivated me to learn, and be aware of feminism.

Fernando: Hell, I can regard myself a feminist too, even though I am male. Listening to bands like Bikini Kill when I was growing up, gave me more of a sense of humanism than feminism though. It makes me ill to think that so many people still put so much importance on gender. But I think we have a long way to go until we finally break those barriers between "man and woman". If anyone has the chance to read *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin (one of the first female revolutionists), do it! It was written in the late 1800s, but it holds truths about the flaws of social expectations on women and men and how they should relate.

MRR: I consider Riot This to be a political punk band, made up of activists. What kind of political "actions" have you been a part of in the last year?

Liz: The best "action" that we take part in is the volunteering that we do with LA Works (www.laworks.com). The big issue for us is getting people to work on your community around you before going on and taking on the bigger projects. It's like fighting against war and wanting to bring the soldiers home, but if the communities are torn and over ruled by street gangs, what kind of homes are they going to and what war did they leave or go into? We have also done some "freeway blogging" of our own. I defiantly recommend everyone to go online to see what it is and to go do it! I don't want to say too much of what it is because it is very much an underground movement. I am happy we decided to take part in it. We're hoping to do work with ARA in Los Angeles. It's a great movement of action against racism and sexism.

MRR: You've been playing quite a bit all over Southern California. How have you been received? Do you have any plans for touring in 2006/2007?
Celeste: We have had a lot of good feedback after every show. This happens a lot though, right before we go on, a lot of people mainly stand there and watch us with their eyes wide open and their arms crossed. Towards the middle of the set they start losing up and getting into it. After that's when the good feedback comes. I get this a lot, "You're a good drummer… for a girl", feels like I wasn't qualified for just being a drummer.
Liz: As a female musician it is odd at times because you know sometimes people are staring you down wondering if were going to be good because were girls and if Fernando is good because he plays with a bunch of girls. Sometimes they just assume he's gay which can suck. Like what Celeste said, after a few songs they realize yeah this band can rock and it turns into an awesome show. Defiantly though, the whole "for a girl" thing has to stop. Celeste brings up a good point. Were not judged as musicians, were judged as girl musicians and that also adds more to the theory of how I believe we have to prove ourselves everyday as women no matter what.
Fernando: I feel the love!

MRR: I know you have been networking with many other female fronted bands. What other bands is Riot This into right now?
Liz: Honestly All or Nothing H.C. has been a huge impact on me right now, and being involved with On The Rag Records has introduced us to great bands. Mostly for myself, I'm into a lot of underground bands like A Pretty Mess, Gruk, Sin Remedio and pretty much every band we have met so far. Support your locals!
Celeste: Bruise Violet holds a special place in my heart.
Fernando: I'd like to shout out Gruk and Remedio one more time! Pillow Fight was such a fun band to play with, as well as Butt Trumpet. My main influences are Hüsker Dü and Born Against… I love all music though.

MRR: What do you do besides play in Riot This?
Liz: Fight the system!!!!!! Ha ha! I love to write. I quit my job to be more of a musician and writer. Hopefully I'll find a living out of it, or I'm going to be a 60-year old crazy lady playing acoustic guitar on the streets singing about "back in my day…." Ha ha.
Celeste: I love playing my drums! I also do screen prints on paper and fabric. One day I want to start my own screenprinting business. I made our logo "She" and will continue to make more art for Riot This. I also do some photography for my current job.
Fernando: I play bass in another band right now (burning the candle on both ends) called Traumatized. I also tend to delve in some graphic design every now and then. It's what I went to school for. But now I mostly just chill and do small projects at home for myself. I have a regular job managing a toy store.

MRR: Do many of you still live at home? Do your parents support you playing in a band?
Liz: I have been moving around since I was eighteen. Now I'm living with Celeste and her family. I only have a mom and her side of the family. They have been supportive of me no matter what. Celeste's family has given me a home and shown me the same love as my mom. I know I'm lucky to have people like them in my life. Even when I dye my hair red and ruin their tub…they still love me. Ha ha.
Celeste: My parents are highly supportive of what I do in my life. From getting tattoos and piercing my body in places they wouldn't normally approve of, they accept me and still love me...no matter what.
Fernando: Why, yes I do. I love my parents, but they think the music I play is crazy and possibly has corrupted my soul. But we get along this way.

MRR: Do you think that punk has potential to empower and change the lives of people in a positive manner?
Celeste: Yes. I think some people should really pay attention to some punk bands and their lyrics. There are a lot of bands out there that have a lot to offer us with political awareness and other related topics that might affect everyday life. Hopefully our music will affect some people out there in a positive manner.
Liz: Defiantly yes! But the people in the scene need to grasp the idea of what punk is about. It's not just about the glam of being an individual. I mean that's a wonderful thing to have. To find a scene where you can be yourself, but I think lot of kids have become lost in it. Punk, to me, is about a revolution of individuality, liberalism, and unity.
Fernando: I think all forms of art have the power to change the world. I think more people should be open- minded to this possibility and embrace what others have to offer. From Spanish rock, to Hip-Hop, to post-modern art, to poetry… just get out there and experience it!

MRR: Are there any issues that are on your agenda to tackle as feminist/activists/role models for younger punks?
Liz: We have millions of ideas but now it's just where do we plant the seed to make the ideas happen and grow? Hopefully through our music we can build a community of young activist and start building groups of million ideas and go out there and make them happen together. Basically our big issue is to stop the violence between people. I honestly love talking and meeting people. I try not to judge or use degrading harsh words. Now imagine if I can get five people to do the same and then they each get five more people to do the same. We can start a chain reaction.

MRR: What plans does Riot This have for the future?
Liz: After the split with Bruise Violet, Gruk, & All or Nothing H.C. we defiantly want to put out a full-length. We want to play wherever we can and most importantly be known as a band that not only rocked hard but also brought a positive message and inspired others to do the same. This is just the beginning for us.
Celeste: Grow as people and musicians and take this project as far as we can.
Fernando: Hopefully to have you remember this band, and for everyone reading this to continue to hear more and more of the music Riot This puts out.

MRR: Anything else that you would like the readers to know about Riot This?
Liz: We're musicians and from what we can tell we play well. We don't want to be judged as "girls" or "that guy who plays with those girls." Judge us as Riot This or by our names. No matter what you say, we'll just be glad you acknowledge us as a group or as people, and had not tare us apart for our gender. Also, the most important thing for us to keep the revolution going, whether it be music, art, styles or whatever, as long as the unity is there we can accomplish anything positive. Also, to all the riot grrrls and feminists of the revolution who are out there, lets keep going and lets never forget what we have accomplished and lets let the hardcore riot grrrl revolution begin!
Celeste: Stay true and be positive.
Fernando: We're friends before band-mates and fellow musicians. This shows in the music and how we portray ourselves when we play. If you ever see us, say hi… because as far as I can tell we're friendly people who love to meet new people. We don't judge.

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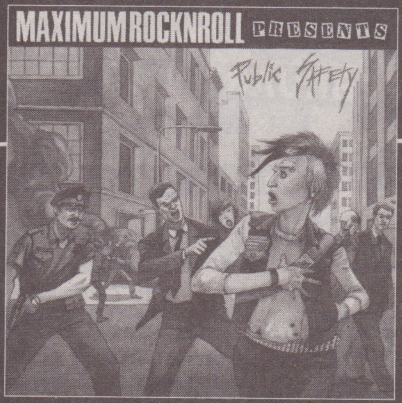

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LA PIOVRA

La Piovra is a great fast hardcore punk band from Italy. They say they are a cross between Lifes Halt and Elvis—I think they are pretty dead on. Members of La Piovra have done time in other great Italian hardcore bands, and they recently completed a tour of the US. Interview by Ryan Cappelletti

MRR: Tell me a little about La Piovra? What past or present bands have you guys played in? How did the band come about?
Basically the members are three-fifths of L'Amico Di Martucci and four-fifths of Ohuzaru—Marco Simonella and me on guitars, Federico Drigo on vox, Alberto Breda plays bass, and Mattia Bardin on drums. A few songs from the one side 12" on Youth Attack were supposed to be part of L'Amico Di Martucci LP, which was never recorded 'cause we broke up before finishing the songs (Nov 2003). Since the songs were completely written by myself, I didn't want them to be lost, more than I'm still excited by the idea of fast rock 'n' roll, so in the following October, after practicing four or five times, Marco and I recorded six tracks and Federico recorded the vocals on just three of them. We'd have finished everything after a few months, but Marco and me were totally into the Ohuzaru LP, which was coming out that period, and had to think about the US tour, so we decided to finish everything back from the tour (Summer 2005).

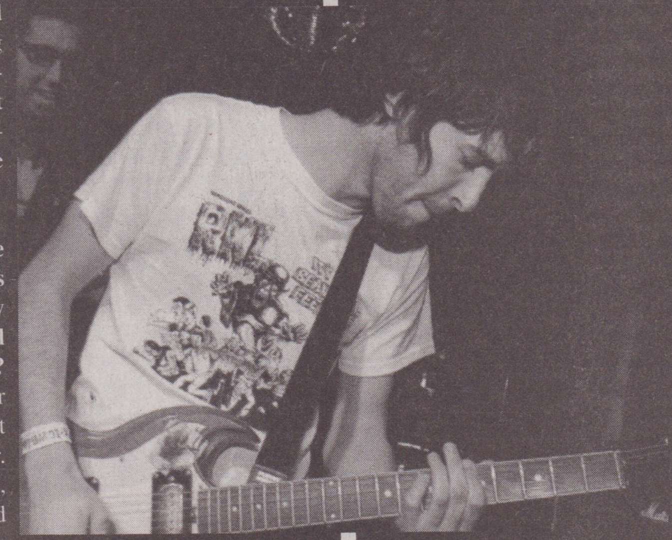
During the Ohuzaru tour, I met a singer from a band we love (let's call him Mr. X) who seemed enthusiastic about singing in La Piovra (Fede would have played the bass). It sounded a little bit strange to have a singer from another continent, but in that moment La Piovra was more a project band than a live band, so the idea wasn't that impossible. Anyway, back to Italy we lost a lot of time waiting for Mr. X 's decision: he didn't contact us for months and declined at the end. It was already October 2005, and we wanted to finish everything as soon as possible when the recording studio phoned us with the bad news that every song had been accidentally cancelled in the moving from one studio to another! They were really sorry and offered us to record for free in December. While going to the studio a car crashed violently against ours, breaking every instrument and definitely hurting our necks. After two months we re-recorded with Alberto playing the bass, and the result was lot more satisfactory than the former, 'cause at least we bought new instruments with the car insurance, hehehe. I sent some promo CDs and Mark McCoy proposed to release a record, which was intended to be out in June. Again Mr. X offered himself, this time for the cover art. We accepted, loving his previous works but after five months of waiting he admitted he had no time to finish it. At the very end Mark made the layout, now the record is out and we are satisfied.

MRR: Where does that name come from?
La Piovra means " The Octopus," but it's also the name of an old Italian fiction about mafia. I've always been amazed by this creature since I read *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea* and started watching pirate's movies with their hidden treasures. And don't forget the unreleased scene from *The Goonies* one of our favorite masterpieces ever…you've seen that, right?

MRR: What song for you means the most right now?
If I had to choose, I'd say "Danni Collaterali," a new song on the 7" on Punks Before Profits that was released to coincide

with the US tour. It's a little bit different, longer, and more articulated than those from the one-sided 12" and reflects our progress.

MRR: You guys came to the US this past fall/winter. The US has been and is now under a lot of fire for choices our government has made. How do you feel about the US in a political sense—for example the war/invasion into other countries and the over all "we rule" attitude we portray?
To be honest, I'm not very involved in political issues. Most of the time media hides what's really happening so it's not easy to judge. What seems clear is that Bush is not able to manage what's around him and can't deal all the problems. Supposing it's him making at least one of the decisions...So the opinion I have is that America is adrift. Let's say it's a matter of corruption and money, like everywhere else.



MRR: On a non-political note some of you had been to the US before this tour, correct? How was that? Any cool bands you got to see or any cool highlights you want to comment on?
I'd been on tour with Ohuzaru for more than one month last year, and it was one of my best experiences ever. We played with a lot of great bands, in particular Running For Cover and Threatener struck me most. These were bands we played with more than once, so even if we are a bit out of touch now, those days created a feeling that's more than simply, "know each other and share a stage." I also enjoyed Fighting Dogs, Machine Gun Romantics, and Baroness very much. Our travel mates Iron Lung was definitely one of the best bands I saw live: it's impressive how powerful and blasting this two-man band is. They always led us to the best vegan fast food restaurants and record shops in town, so that I came back four kilos fatter and full of records.

One of the craziest experience for us was crossing the Arizona desert: I traveled with three guys from Phoenix who were coming to our show in L.A., when just after few miles a stone broke the driver's glass and I spent the rest of the trip with a bag on my head to protect me from the suffocating heat. From that day I've never been the same...

MRR: I just got back from a European tour and each night before the show we got dinner. I am not just talking about some bread with some fruit; we got a good-sized dinner. In the US this is not common practice. Do you feel that food should just part of the practice of setting a DIY punk gig?
Food is important, but there are some basic differences between Americans and European's gigs: in Europe you arrive in the afternoon at the venue, and usually never start playing before 11 pm: you really need to eat something before leaving the place (which never happens before 2 or 3 am). More than this, it's hard to find economic/vegan foods, while in the US supermarkets keep open all night long and you have a bigger choice indeed. It must be considered also that in Europe the gasoline is reaching awful prices, and most of highways are fucking expensive, so it's really hard for a DIY punk band to gain what you spent. For example, the trip to Bologna from Venice costs you about 50 euros for 100 miles! Paying 50 fucking euros added to those of the rent of the van + instruments means that a foreign band the minimum should be more or less 200 euros. In America the highways are free, and gas's price allows you to stay on a lower budget, even for very long distances. Gigs usually end around 10 pm, so it's normal to have dinner after the show.

MRR: To me La Piovra has a strong Los Crudos sound with some rock parts tossed in. What are some of the bands that inlfuenced your sounsd?
A lot of people said that Federico's voice remind them about Martin from Los Crudos...The bands that have influenced most directly are the classics: Adolescents, Koro, Peggio Punx, FU'S, Indigesti, Zero Boys, and a lot of non-punk band such as Radio Birdman, The Sonics, Kiss, and Chuck Berry. I also love compilations like *Back from the Grave, Las Vegas Grind*, as well as *Killed By Death, Bloodstains Across*, etc.

Anyway, we come from the "new punk generation," so a lot of bands of the new millennium are constantly inspiring us: Career Suicide, Regulations, Government Warning, Hjertestop, Dean Dirg, Henry Fiats Open Sore, The Vicious, etc...

MRR: When I was in Italy some of the areas had a pretty strong scene and some great bands. Can you tell us about the scene in your area? Bands/labels other things we can check out.
In our town there ain't a lot of punk bands, as kids are now totally into melodic hardcore a la Blink 182 or into new metal shit...The only great active bands left are The Mojomatics and The Hormonas (both bands got members from L'AdM) but they have little to do with punk "scene," being totally r'n'r / blues and psychobilly, so they play a lot more in clubs than in squats. Sometimes I organize some gigs at "Rivolta," but the people who come are mainly friends more than those "involved in the scene." If you want to have a good scene you have to go to Bologna, where something's really going on with Agipunk records—bands such as Ed, BanXThis, Giuda, and the glorious Atlantide, a small squat where we've seen the best shows for years...Unfortunately, by the time people read this, Atlantide won't exist anymore...fuck it.

MRR: In Italy you have a lot of classic HC punk bands—too many to mention. In the US, most of the older bands have gotten back together to cash in on the now cool sound. Do a lot of the older Italian bands still play for high prices just because the style is back in? Or are there some that got back into punk because they love it?
During the last few years I've seen tons of disgusting American reunions, the worst of which was Underdog at "Rivolta" last April: the cache was fixed for 1700 euros, but at the end there were "only" 1600 euros (!!!). A shameful quarrel happened for those 100 missing euros.

Everything got calmer only when the guy who organized the gig paid from his own pocket. In Italy as well a lot of bands got back together (Impact, Eu's Arse, Affluente, etc.) but it seems they do it just for the desire to play and have fun together and not for money. These shows are in squats, and for sure I know the bands don't ask for much.

MRR: Last words?
Thanks a lot for the interview Ryan!

slyctions@hotmail.com

LEMURIA

Lemuria is a pop punk band from Buffalo, New York that has charmed loads of punkers with their well-crafted songs and DIY ethic. The members of the band help keep the Buffalo punk scene thriving, all while taking the time to answer some questions about why they put out their own records, life on the road, and the joys of a 99-cent breakfast. Interview by Derek Neuland.

Lemuria is: Sheena Ozzell (guitar and vocals, Alex Kerns (drums and vocals), Jason Draper (bass and backing vocals

MRR: The three of you live in Buffalo, NY, a city that not a lot of people think positively about. After touring across the country multiple times, why are you always excited to come home to Buffalo, despite its bad reputation and declining economy?

Jason: I believe that most people's opinions on Buffalo are based on the weather here. Four to five months out of the year are spent in a constant dismal gray state with obscene amounts of snow. That being said, I love Buffalo. I've done a lot of traveling over the past seven to eight years, and in my experience it's rare to find a city whose inhabitants are so supportive of each other. I think this has a lot to due with our declining economy and because we are a mid-sized city. In regards to punk (and I use the term to include all genres of independent music), we're a big enough city to have various subgenre scenes thriving, yet at the same time it's not so big that people become just a face in the crowd. That's really important to me. Everyone knows each other, or at least knows of each other. I guess it just boils down to it being a friendly city.

Sheena: Buffalo is cheap! We can afford to pay rent in houses while we are touring, and come back and not be totally broke.

Alex: Because the economy is so depressed in Buffalo, it's actually a desirable place for any form of artist to live. You can buy house in a nice neighborhood near a college campus for $20,000 or rent a five bedroom house, full with an attic and basement for $700 a month. Also, right around the corner from where I live you can get 99 cent breakfast from Amy's Place, which is an excellent diner with a wait staff who will understand you when you say "vegan." The only reason I can think of people thinking negatively of Buffalo is if they just drive through it on a highway, because it looks like an abandoned rustbelt city, which isn't a completely false observation. But I think anybody could feel comfortable if they spent a little time in the community.

MRR: Alex and Sheena, you both live on Custer Street in houses that are known for hosting punk and hardcore shows with bands from around the world. How do you think this affects the band and you personally?

Alex: I'm currently in the process of buying the house I live in on Custer St. It's cheaper to buy the house than to pay rent for two years. We have basement shows and I have my distro for the label I run, Art of the Underground, in the basement during shows. It's nice to be able to have a solid space for shows to help out all the bands that help us out on tour. It's also at the end of a dead-end street, so cops rarely drive by, and even when they do, there are so many house parties in our neighborhood that they normally don't hassle us. Another plus about the location in the summertime is that it's next to a free community pool, and if you feel like swimming at night, there's only a short fence as an obstacle. Some of my roommates actually practice with their bands in the basement of our house, but we actually practice over a bar that hosts some of the best shows in the city, called Mohawk Place. 99 Custer has been doing shows for about six years and has had bands from all over the world tour through it, along with 29 Custer St. being around for about four years.

Sheena: We are really lucky to have two houses on one street that do shows, and house 17+ kids between the two of them. Bands play our houses, and then when we are on tour, we usually end up running into most of them, somewhere, while we are touring.

Jason: Custer Street has become an institution in the Buffalo punk scene. There have consistently been punk houses operating on the street for over six years. I can't even imagine what Buffalo would be like without their existence. Personally this has influenced me by showing me that you can do things for yourself, your own way. Initially it turned me on to the idea that if you didn't feel like dealing with "the assholes" that run the local clubs, that you could take matters into your own hands, make your own rules. As time passed I watched all of these bands come through those basements. Most of them weren't very well known, but they were all welcomed. It made me want to go out on the road and tour for myself.

MRR: Have you seen anything like the unity of the two Custer Street houses anywhere else?

Jason: We've come across a lot of unity in the scenes around the country. But as of yet we have not run across two punk houses that work so much with each other.

Sheena: New Brunswick, NJ has a street with a few houses on it that do shows. I'm not sure if they are connected at all, but it reminds me of Custer St.

MRR: Do you find it frustrating that you are often compared to Discount just because you are an indie rock band with a female vocalist?

Sheena: The only thing that frustrates me about getting compared to Discount is that I really feel like it's the easiest comparison to us, only because Discount was female-fronted. Almost all of the bands that I'm into that have a female vocalist get the "you sound like Discount" card pulled on them, even when they don't sound anything like them. Discount was a great band, and it's definitely a compliment getting compared to them, but I don't think that we sound like them, especially in our new songs.

Jason: At first it didn't really bother us too much. We couldn't argue with it because our earlier material had a definite Discount (and Jawbreaker) feel to it. Now that some time has passed, and we're more comfortable writing songs together, I don't feel like we sound too much like those bands anymore. So now the comparisons get a little annoying. It seems like any poppy punk band with a female vocalist is automatically compared to Discount, but then again the

comparison game is always a hard one to play.

MRR: Lemuria tours almost six months out of the year. Is that stressful for any of you or your relationships with friends, family, and significant others?

Jason: The road is a stressful place by nature. When you don't have a set home to go back to every night, there is always a worrying in the back of your mind: "Are people going to show up tonight?" "Will we have a place to stay tonight?" "Am I going to be able to find decent pizza and Arizona iced tea in this town?" "Why are there constantly banana peels outside of the van door whenever I open it?" All of this causes stress between the people on the tour, but eventually you learn how to handle each other, and when to give each other some room to breathe. As for stress with the people at home, there's not much of that for me. They understand that I'm out here doing the thing I love most, and at the same time I know they are back home doing the things they want to do with their lives. It's sad when you don't have your friends and family around you all the time, but it's so unbelievably comforting knowing that they will be waiting with open arms for you when you get back.

Sheena: We all have significant others at the moment, and it's really hard leaving them for long periods of time, but if we didn't tour because of them, we would all regret it. I know that my and Alex's families are really supportive, and at least pretend to be interested in why we are touring. So we usually stay in pretty close touch with friends and family back home when we are gone. I started taking pictures with a digital camera on the road, and then I would get individual copies of random ones for really cheap, and I would send them as post cards, with letters on the back.

Alex: I'm usually stressed out for a couple weeks before tour kicks off, but then once it starts I feel completely relieved. Because I know that anything I left behind I can't really do anything about until I return home anyways. I wish I could always be on tour! I actually get annoyed when we play with bands who complain about touring and they say how it's just one of those things they have to do. I think touring is a privilege.

MRR: Lemuria just played The Fest 5 in Gainesville, Florida. Have you ever played a show of that magnitude before? How was it?

Sheena: The fest was incredible. We played in a really comfortable venue to a bunch of friends, and it was really special.

Alex: One of the best parts about playing The Fest is that you get a free ticket for the full weekend. I had such a great deal of fun attending and playing.

Jason: First off the fest was 100% amazing, and we're so grateful that we were asked to play. As for the magnitude of the show, we've played shows in front of a larger number of people before, but never anything that cohesive. So many amazing bands constantly playing. It's a wonder that our heads didn't blow up.

MRR: Going on tour for months at a time, you're bound to see hundreds of bands. Who are some of the bands you have played with that have stood out over the others?

Jason: My all-time favorite band that we've come across so far has been Greasegun from Baltimore. Some others are True if Destroyed (Philly), The Ergs (Jersey), The Merkurs and Delay (both Cleveland), This is My Fist! (Cali), The Exit Strategy (Buffalo), Off With Their Heads (Minneapolis), and Karmella's Game (Baltimore).

Sheena: Off With Their Heads, Delay, Andrew Jackson Jihad, The Social Classics, Rainer Maria, and The Ergs are my favorites so far.

Alex: Some of my favorite bands that we have played with so far have been The Ergs, Social Classics, Delay, Off With Their Heads, Andrew Jackson Jihad, and Greasegun. Some of my local favorites we play with are the Unwelcome Guests. And of course, the bands we've toured with!

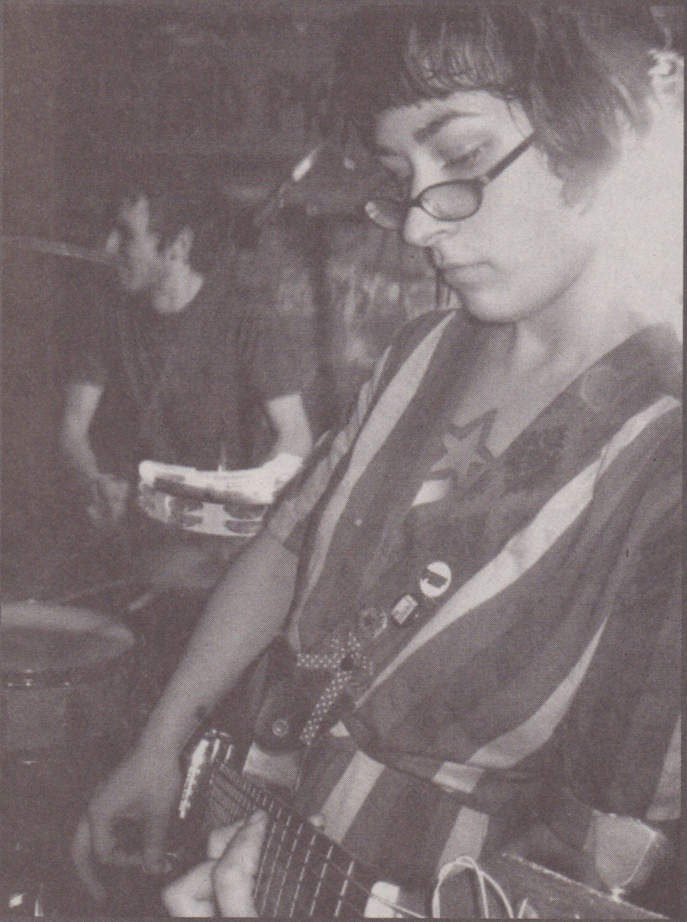
MRR: You recently released a split LP/CD with Kind of Like Spitting. How did that split come to be?

Jason: Alex met Ben randomly at some show and they became friends. I'm sure Alex could tell the story better. It involves free food.

Alex: I met Ben from Kind of Like Spitting about four years ago in Syracuse, NY at a show I randomly went to, and I wasn't even there to see them. But I got to talking to him, then ended up going to a diner, then ended up helping them out with car trouble and spending a good amount of time talking about touring and records, etc. We originally decided back then that I was going to release some records on Art of the Underground for him, but then after sending him our band's demo awhile back he asked if we'd like to do a split together and a tour. We toured together for five weeks. They were sweethearts and I miss them a great deal!

MRR: Listening to your songs, there are the obvious Jawbreaker and Superchunk influences. What are some other bands that have helped molded Lemuria's sound throughout the past couple years?

Jason: I'd have to say Leatherface has been a big influence on our songwriting. As far as my bass



playing goes, Dinosaur Jr. has always been a huge influence on me. Oh, yeah, and Tegan and Sara are a driving force for me to make our songs as catchy as possible. I swear those girls signed a deal with the devil.

Alex: I'd say some bands that have influenced the drumming in me would be Trans Am, The Police, and power pop record sets. On the whole, as a band, I would say Leatherface, Jawbox, Lemonheads and a lot of early '90s punk.

Sheena: For me it's Leatherface, The Magnetic Fields, and Trans Am.

MRR: Aside from your demo, every one of your releases has been released on vinyl. Do you think there will be a higher demand for vinyl in the upcoming years due to the decline in CD sales, even though it's much more costly to manufacture?

Alex: I think vinyl is a strong format that will last for a very long time. I don't see an end in sight, even with mp3s becoming more popular and music more easily attained freely. Vinyl survived the tape generation, and I think the compact disc will eventually be extinct. When I listen to a record on vinyl, I'm much more attentive because I put more effort in playing it. I also like the idea of having an intermission where you have to flip the album, to renew your attention. I like when albums are designed, pace-wise, to have two sides—two beginnings and two ends.

Sheena: Vinyl sounds so good, compared to any other format for music. The cost of vinyl production is high, but I think it's mainly because there aren't that many pressing plants anymore. I think people will pay decent money to keep printing music on vinyl, at least for a while.

Jason: I personally don't think there will be a higher demand for vinyl. Unfortunately I think people see it as too much of an inconvenience. I myself fall victim to this. It's so rare that I'm actually at home to listen to my records. As a result the music I have on CD gets way more rotation.

MRR: Alex, you also run Art of the Underground and have helped release every Lemuria record on your label. Has this been out of necessity or do you just prefer to have a hand in the release?

A: It's nice to know you have complete control of your record, and it's also nice when you receive an order from an area where you would've never expected to receive one, then respond and learn a little about the area, and possibly play there someday if they have a scene. Usually when other labels offer records, I just ask if we can split release the record, which I did with All Things Ordinary, Salinas, and Standstill. We do have a song coming out on a 7" comp on Crafty Records, which I'll have no hand in, label-wise. We're recording a single this week for the single series that I run, which is limited to 250 copies. Besides the comp and the single, we're not sure what we're doing for the next release.

Jason: At first it was out of convenience (and I guess necessity had a bit to do with it), but then it was comforting knowing that our releases were going to be given so much attention by the label. I mean when a band member runs the label, you know they are going to work their ass off to get it out there for people to hear.

MRR: Any last words or thoughts?

Jason: The Midwest really needs to start carrying Arizona iced tea in cans. Is it possible to go through iced tea withdrawal?

Alex: To touch back on the issue of the 99 cent breakfast at Amy's Place from the beginning of the interview, it includes two eggs, home fries with onions and green peppers, and toast. If you'd like it vegan, they'll replace your eggs with lentils and broccoli. If you come to Buffalo, I'll go with you.

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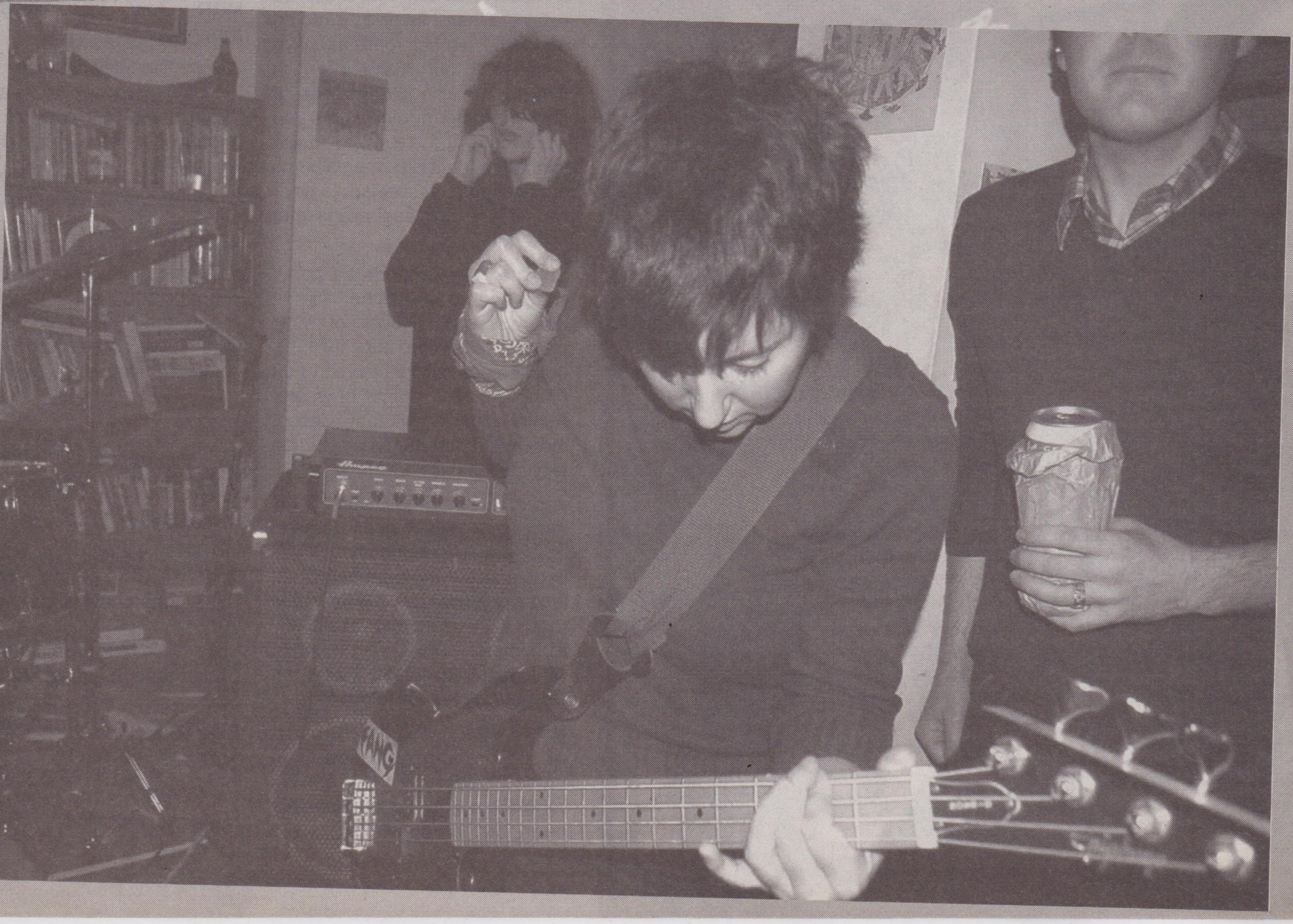
Discography:

Demo CDR, 2004
Self titled 7", Art of the Underground/All Things Ordinary, 2005
Split 7" with Frame, Art of the Underground/Salinas, 2006
Split LP/CD with Kind of Like Spitting, Art of the Underground, 2006
Art of the Underground Singles Series Volume 10 7", Art of the Underground, 2006



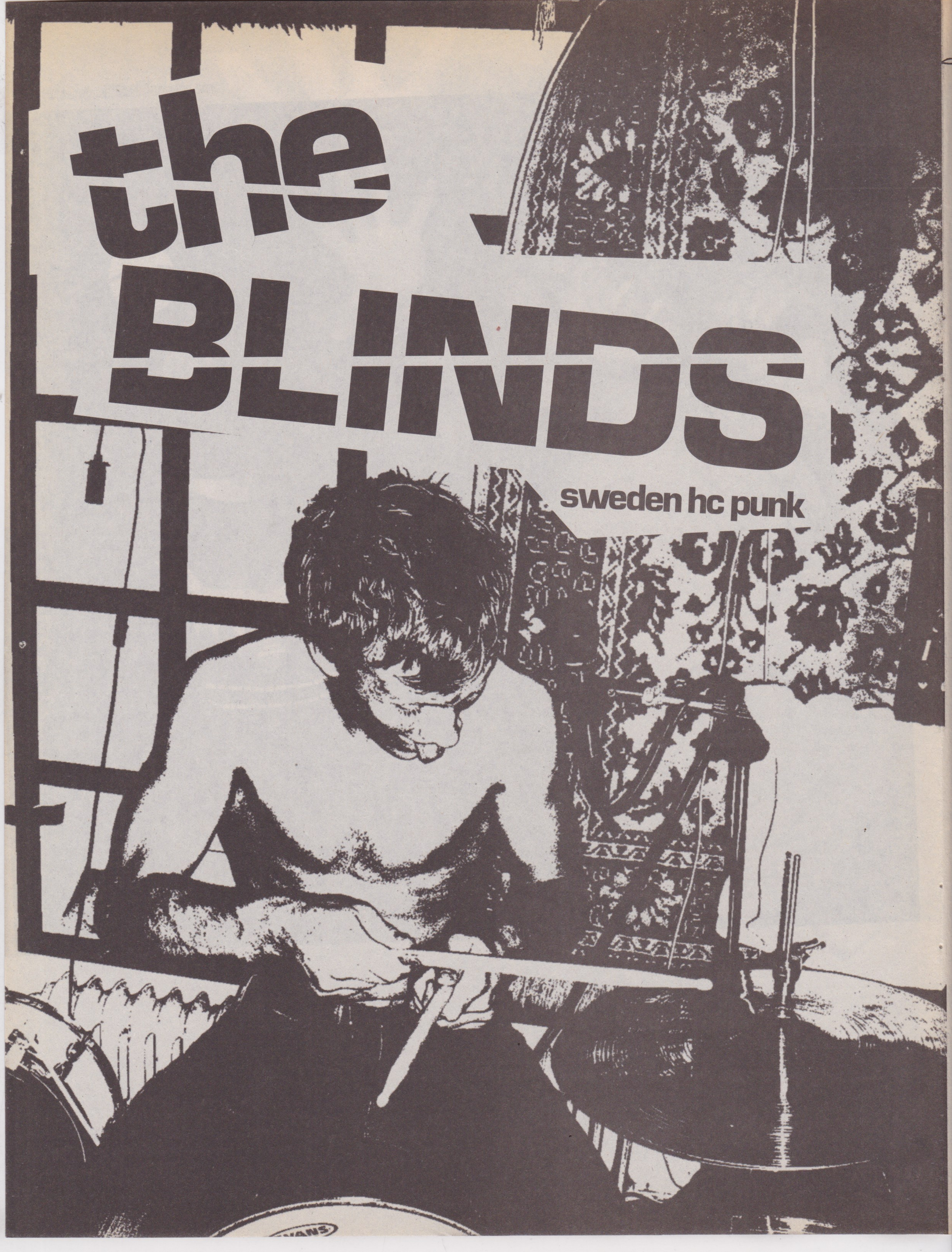
all photos by
martin sorrondeguy

this page: charm (japan)

opposite page
top: boom boom kid (argentina)
bottom: sex vid (seattle, US)

the BLINDS

sweden hc punk



The Blinds are probably one of the best bands around in Sweden at the moment. The first time I heard about them was after they played one of there first shows at a festival in the south of Sweden and I got to listen to their demo which was kickass rock'n'roll hardcore like The Hives but shitloads faster. Their tape came out in the US on No Way Records, run by Brandon from Direct Control. Now the LP is being pressed, so here is an interview with these young talents from a small village outside of Uppsala. It was conducted after a show in the rehearsal room of Diskonto with Insurgent Kid and The Vicious. Enjoy! Interview with Olli by Potin.

MRR: So, please introduce the band and give us some background facts.

Yeah, on drums we have David who's 16; on guitars, Victor 18 and Gustav 16; and I (Olli) play the bass and scream out nice tunes.

We started up in mine and Victor's basement with David and at that time we were really bad. We called ourselves Kannibalerna (The Cannibals) and then we changed the style of our music and the name of our band a couple of times until we finally decided on The Blinds. We started kind of slowly with some rock'n'roll tunes but with time we started to play faster and faster (and harder) and that's when our friend Affe introduced us to the hardcore scene. At this time which was in 2003 we didn't know anything about hardcore and we were more into punk rock and rock'n'roll bands like Turbonegro and The Sonics, which we still listen to a lot though the hardcore scene is really interesting and a lot more fun.

MRR: Yeah, you guys are really young! I think you shocked the Swedish hardcore scene quite a lot there when you came from nowhere. So what bands made you fall in love with hardcore?

The ones that really spoke to me were Angry Samoans with the record *Back from Samoa* and the Circle Jerks' *Group Sex*. I get a hard-on and cum every time I listen to those records. Bad Brains has also been important for me. I can't do nothing else than just love it!

MRR: Ha! Yeah, that's good shit without a doubt. So you've released a demo. Where did you record that one? The sound quality is fucking amazing!

We recorded it in Studio Hogfarm in Västerås. The guy who recorded it was Anders Olsson and has never done a hardcore recording before but still it came out really good. He's also incredibly good-looking!

MRR: Did you guys go to some sort of music school?

Nope, we are natural gifts, all of us.

MRR: Wow! The rumors goes that it's the dad who's with you at all your shows is the brain behind the band and also in control! You know, like The Jackson Five.

Yeah, he writes all our songs, and record them himself and everything. It's not even us playing on the demo and the upcoming album. No seriously, no one in the band has a driver's license so he is always around and though he's quite old he thinks hardcore is quite amusing. Without him we wouldn't have left this fucking village Harbo yet.

MRR: Ok, I would be proud the day I have kids if they turn out to make as great music as you do! Ha ha. So how is everything going with the new LP? Is it coming soon? You have to explain what the fuck is taking all this time!

It's not our fault! Ha ha, in the beginning it was the mixing and then the master was late because the studio closed for vacation during the summer and other bullshit. When it finally was finished, Affe started to make the artwork. Then he was taking his time with that and it took him about half a year to finish it. In the end we started a strike against him since we play in another band with him and didn't rehearse with that one 'til he was finished and finally he send it to Kaj and the Wasted Sounds HQ and he had waited so long for it that he planned other releases which the money had gone too so he waited a while with sending it to get pressed and we don't know if he's done it yet. I hope he does 'cause otherwise I have to go find him and do ugly things to him and his family…No, seriously. I won't hurt his family.

MRR: Let's hope we can see this beauty coming sometime this Fall then, so nobody gets hurt. Some of you play in Undergång as well right or is it another band you got with Affe?

Victor played in Undergång but dropped out cause he wanted to put all his time into The Blinds. David and me were in Deal With It! for a while and Affe is in that one too but we dropped out recently. I think David will be doing a goodbye-demo with them or something pretty soon though.

MRR: All right then. So if you're going put all your time into Blinds maybe we can see a European tour pretty soon?

Yeah, we hope so. Maybe if you pay for it. Well, we are planning to do both Europe and the States when the record is out. Just going to get some merch and stuff first.

MRR: Sounds great! I think a lot of people will be happy when they read this. I'm not going to pay but I would gladly come with you to the States. Who do I need to make out with to get in that van?

That would be my dad.

MRR: How many gigs have you done so far? You guys been really active since I first heard about you.

I really don't know but I think it's about 60 shows the last two years. We haven't done so many shows for awhile because the record was delayed but we did a short tour last summer with Restless Youth around Scandinavia. We had a blast!

MRR: I guess you get as good response as you do here everywhere you go. Where was your best show?

I think we get good responses mostly but it happens that redneck-nazis want to beat my ass. The best show was probably in Copenhagen. It was total mayhem. People were running around naked and everyone was nice. The place was great overall and the audience kicked ass when we played, though they were too drunk to even stand on their legs later that night. We also got 30 beers for the band and of course we like that! So if anyone wanna book us for a show, be sure to have plenty of beer around! Ha ha!

MRR: Fucking redneck scums. How can anyone want to beat up a cute kid like you? Ha ha! So what does your dad say about the drinking? According to Swedish law some of you shouldn't drink! Maybe he got used to it by time? Was it Ungdomshuset you played in Copenhagen?

Yeah. It was at Ungdomshuset, which is a really amazing place. My dad doesn't care too much anymore. I think he understands. As long as we can play!

MRR: Well, that's good! Maybe he has no choice. I think Ungdomshuset is a great place too. There eviction is due next week. Are you going there to fight the scums?

I would really like to go there and fight some Christian and cop asses but it's quite hard to get there. School has started and I don't have a lot of cash. You can go there and fight in our place! I think it would be a scandal if they got evicted. We wanna play there a lot more!

MRR: Yeah, that shouldn't have to happen. Anyway, how is it combining school and the punk rock lifestyle? Do your teachers understand what you do or do you have to skip school anyway to go play a show?

The teachers seem to think it's good that we have hobbies; at least that's how it worked in my old school. I just started in a new school and I haven't found out what they think about it yet. If they don't care about our music we'll just have to skip school and go anyway. Maybe we'll destroy something in our school as well.

MRR: Ok, let's have some merch questions! How many copies did the demo sell?

Oh, I'm not sure at all but it's 250+ in Sweden and also 300 copies of the cassette version that was released in the States.

MRR: Yeah, how did that happen?

Last summer when Direct Control was on tour here our friend played our demo for Brandon and he really enjoyed what he was listening to so he told us he wanted to release it when he got back home, which he then did. Really nice guys, Direct Control!

MRR: All right, best record at the moment?

Right now I'm listening to Dead Boys – *Younger, Louder, and Snottier*; also Adolescents with "Brats In Battalion" and some Radio Birdman is running hot around here!

MRR: OK! Time to take my things and leave then! I have some vegan goodies in the kitchen waiting for me. Come back to Umeå soon. Last words before you hit the cradle?

Give us some of those goodies! My parents don't feed me! Thanks for the interview. It was a cozy one! People who want to get in touch with some handsome young boys can check out www.myspace.com/theblindshc cause our real homepage is down at the moment. We'll come to Umeå as soon as it stops being so damn cold! Take care! Hugs and Kisses!

FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE THE STORY OF THE

SUBHUMANS

PART 2

BY LANCE HAHN

Born out of Wild Youth, Steve's post-Mental band, Pagans started at the end of 1981.

Dick: "Some songs made it from Wild Youth's set to the Pagans, but the Pagans tunes were of a higher level of togetherness; the best WY songs were average Pagans ones. WY were good basic punk with tuneful vocals, but suffered from bassist Herb not turning up or getting too out of it. On a good night they were superb though, good rousing chorus style."

Recording the excellent *The Cuckoo Has Flown* demo in 1982, Pagans seem like a band of untapped potential. Mostly recorded live, tracks like "Nobody Cares" and "Wave Goodbye To Your Dreams" are musically exciting just on the side of punk with biting lyrics. They even reworked the Mental track "Attack" to end their live set. Existing for less than the year, the band never got the chance to do any further recordings.

Dick: "Sadly, no. They could've done a whole LP of quality punk rock, but it didn't happen."

No slowing down, the group was back in the studio in January of 1983 recording their fourth EP, *Evolution*. From the cover art depicting the cruelty of vivisection and the back photo of a tortured cat to reinforce it, it was clear that this record had a particular message. The title track, along with being another great hardcore number, was a scathing condemnation of the products used in daily life that directly relate to animal suffering.

> Out in the garden there's a little white cat
> And you're catching cancer as you smoke that fag
> 'When will they find a cure' you choke
> When enough cats have died of smoke?

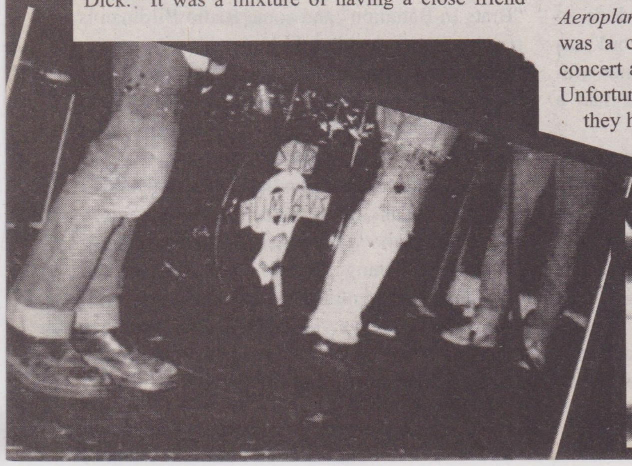
Dick: "It was a mixture of having a close friend telling us how he now literally felt sick when he passed a butcher's window, and the influence of other bands (Crass in particular), and the masses of info coming in the post on stickers and flyers, "Every Six Seconds an Animal Dies in a British Laboratory," for example. These things do have an effect. We were all veggies by '83."

The animal rights movement from the Animal Liberation Front on down to simply being vegetarian was a tangible way for people to connect the personal with the political. By seeing something that was a global issue, you could affect change even in your diet.

Dick: "A picture can do what reams of lyrics can only point at. At the start of the '80s, vegetarians were at the quirky/obsessive end of the food chain. It was socially understood there was probably something wrong with them; there was no sign of BSE and we were in a traditional meat culture. Most punks wore leather jackets and finding veggie food beyond peas and peaches was hard, and expensive. So not eating meat was confrontational enough (whole families were ostracizing their wayward teenagers), let alone pointing out that meat was just one corner in the arena of death we place animals in, animals having 'rights?' You wot? A lot of the reaction was generational, and had worn off on us to various extents. We did little on the physical side of animal rights protest, but a fair few benefit gigs."

The record was also a break from Spiderleg. Not so much the Subhumans leaving that label so much as doing things on their own, *Evolution* was the second release on Bluurg.

Closely on the back of this EP and to keep them in the public eye before their next studio album, a live album was planned. Titled *Time Flies...But Aeroplanes Crash*, the idea was that a live record was a cheap way to both capture the band in concert and get out a full length with lower costs. Unfortunately, the live recording wasn't nearly what they had hoped for. Rather than scrap the whole project, it was reduced to a 12" EP and filled out with some studio recordings.



Dick: "*Time Flies* was fully intended to be a live LP. But the quality of the recording wasn't up to putting out more than the three songs that are on what then became a 12". The two new songs ('People Are Scared' and 'Everyday Life') were good enough, as there were no previous studio versions to compare them to, and "I Don't Wanna Die" just sounded so fast and manic!"

In "Everyday Life," the lyrics travel further down the road of existential angst but with a moment of hope at the end. The song could also be seen as a reference to *Revolution of Everyday Life*, a popular Situationist text resurfacing thanks to punk.

> All this boredom, all this drink
> All this time I've tried to think
> So I jump on a bus and I go somewhere else
> And I sit in a pub and I talk to myself

Dick: "The point of dredging through the dull and repetitive facets of life is to realize that dredging itself is a pointless activity, and merely adds to the list, so get over it! I wrote it on a bus, it was raining, but I wont always be on this bus! Something like that…"

The other new live track was "People Are Scared." In a strange way, the song was a breakthrough in two respects. Lyrically, it perfectly furthers the point of "Everyday Life" connecting personal despair with a greater need for more understanding in humanity. Musically, it is also the band in an almost non-punk mode exploring some amount of improvisation. Another less structured song (certainly more humorous) had been recorded during the *Evolution* sessions but was to remain in the vaults for over a decade.

Dick: "The lyrics were written, and the jammy nature of the music made them easy to fit. The speed of the beat made it unusual, and the extemporizing at the end was more or less as planned—y'know, ''Do, say, 16 bars worth of something in G, then stop.'"

Eight songs in total, the five studio tracks ranged from the Stupid Humans "Get Out Of My Way" to the Monty Python-esque "Work-Rest-Play-Die." But the most haunting and unique was "Susan." Mostly a vocal and piano track, it was entirely unlike anything the group had released before.

Dick: "A friend, Steve Hamilton, wrote the words, which he had no outlet to vocalize, so he asked if

I wanted to use them. Meanwhile, I've always liked mucking about on pianos, and had the basics of the tune, which I put his words to. This was at the same time as *Time Flies* was happening, so, as this live LP was obviously now something de-planned, we put "Susan" on it, and used a one-button tape recording of me playing Bruce's gran's piano as the basic track, and then added twiddly bits."

The rigorous schedule of touring and playing live kept the band in perpetual motion. But with a month to go before recording their second studio LP, Grant decided he'd had enough and quite the band.

Dick: "It took me ages to work it out, because I was, for whatever reason, the last to find out; even then I heard it from Bruce, who told me a week after the end of a tour that Grant left because he thought he wasn't fitting in, or something a bit vague. Bruce said Grant hadn't told me at the end of the tour because I was in a lot of pain (burnt my legs with van radiator water). No hard feelings at all, bit of a shock really."

He was quickly replaced by Pagans guitarist, Phil.

Dick: "In the same phone call, Bruce told me Phil was up for playing. In fact, they'd started practicing together already! No need to pilfer, as the rather obvious idea was that anyone could be in as many bands as they liked."

Over the course of that year, Dick and Bruce had been busy with Bluurg. Along with the various Subhumans releases, they began working with other likeminded and unsigned groups producing and releasing a smattering of 7"s by A-Heads, the Naked, the Instigators, and Faction (who by then were fronted by Mel of A-Heads). It was perhaps that extra studio know-how that led them to one of their most ambitious studio projects.

Photo by Karoline Collins

Starting with extra long lyrics, *From The Cradle To The Grave* would be punk's response to the Who's *A Quick One*. Basically what formalists would call a mini-punk-opera, one long piece was created out of several regular length songs. The difficulty lay in finding ways to make the songs go together and sound like one piece. Once written, it was a challenge to play the entire thing from top to bottom. To make the whole recording more difficult, Bruce would be playing both guitar and bass parts.

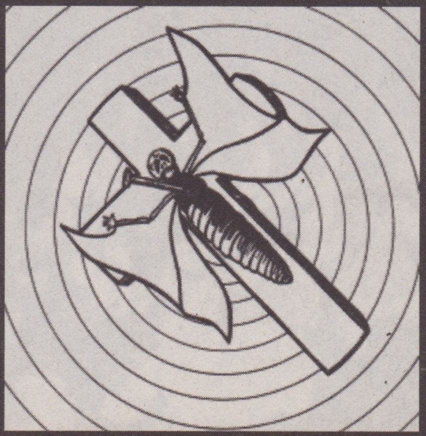
Dick: "I had the lyrics, written over three days at work, and they were obviously going to need a lot of music. Bruce loved the idea of a really *long* one, and had a small pile of ideas in his head, and over about two months of weekend practicing we linked it all up. Bruce played bass, because he invented/knew the bass line, and Phil had only joined, so what with the LP booked to be recorded in October, he was busy enough with all the other bass lines."

The song tells the story of anyone in Britain at that time and that age. It follows, literally from birth to death, the elements of society and social control that act as programming to your mind and personality.

> They'll say you ought to learn a trade to help you in your life
> Success is written in three parts: a job, a house, a wife
> They'll say that school prepares you for the awesome world outside
> Well it certainly gives you bigotry and patriotic pride

Dick: "I was at work, and I hated it. Here I was in the great scheme of things, birth-school-work-die, so I started with that in mind and took it to the end. It's a mass refusal to believe that this is all there is to life, and yes, a result of feeling hemmed in by it. Its not completely nihilistic, there's a slap of hope in 'unless you can react against the brainwash from the start,' and just pointing out the negative realities that do effect a lot of people, well, at least it's not glossing it over."

Even beyond the marathon of the title track, the group's second LP was a big leap forward, both musically and lyrically. The nine songs making up the A-Side almost sound like an entirely different band from *The Day The Country Died*. Musically, they were no longer relying on quickstep hardcore to convey energy or anger. Slower brooding numbers carried as much weight as the faster ones and time changes within songs were popping up. To somewhat announce that they took the musical side as seriously as the lyrical, the album even starts with an untitled instrumental.



On the lyrical side, the next step from connecting the personal with the political is self-analysis. Along with self-doubt and more personal realizations on the record were the critiques of the anarcho and punk scenes that the band was ontologically a part of. For the anarcho scene it was especially questioned in "Where's The Freedom?," a song at least in spirit colluded with the Poison Girls' "Fear Of Freedom."

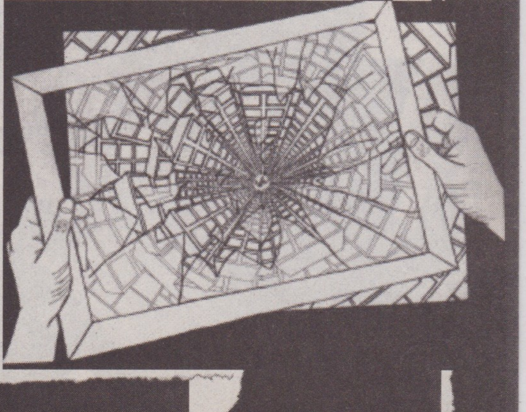
Dick: "I always thought labels, like 'liberals' and even 'anarchists,' were by their nature exclusive of anyone who didn't fit the definition; as by the nature of both words the act of rigid definition is anathema. It was left to everyone and the dog to decide who was what in a world where you have to *be* something. "Where's the Freedom?" asks whether our longing for it and demands for it have become slogans, whether the word itself has been twisted by politics and media, and whether our existence as critics distorts the freedom we do have. And yes, no doubt a lot of 'hardcore anarchists' were faking their commitment, but to moan and niggle away at your own backdoor when you're supposed to be building a tolerant alternative to the system will get you nowhere."

Being able to question the scene that was in some ways more fragile than people realized was an assurance that this group wasn't merely following the pack. This maybe allowed them to take on more capital "P" issues in a new light.

Dick: "It's good to mix lyrical content, and the fact that songs would get carried over to the 'next' record would lead to an undetermined ratio of political/or not songs; a message doesn't have to be overt to be one, and I think every song has some message in it, even if it's fictional. Okay, not every song. But "Adversity"="Fuck TV" and "Wake Up Screaming"="Fuck hard drugs," just more subtle than that."

In its criticism of the different tribes, the song is also the beginnings of a plea for positivity. By utilizing the dark imagery that one expects from a band associated with the circled "N," the group was actually saying that there is a reality beyond "reality."

Dick: "'Rain' is a jab at the self-obsessive doom-laden Gothic types (not all Goths, some



of my best friends, etc.) who bewailed the tortures of existence but reveled in them at the same time, a sort of self-perpetuating misery, in which I was occasionally finding myself indulging. It's a 'snap-out-of-it' sort of song."

But, with the album's fastest track, there is still room to throw a metaphorical brick at the system even if it verges on metaphysical.

Dick: "'Reality Is Waiting For The Bus' is a phrase said over the phone by Dan of the Apostles during a daft 'what is reality?' sort of chat, and I thought, 'too right it is!' Because as I waited for yet another bus I knew I was a slave to expectation, timetables and habit; and all the anger of knowing that would instantly be dispelled by the arrival of the bus. And that's the reality of how the system works! It keeps its power with promises, and delivers a shitty service after it breaks them, and relies on our hope that next time things will get better."

Within all this, an ersatz blues stomp called "Us Fish Must Swim Together" seemed like their newfound theme.

Dick: "I'm just scared of the idea that technology can reach the point where people don't need to; where their/our lives are so organized in advance and so 'safe and secure' that our instincts atrophy. It's already started to happen. In the search for increased 'security,' our movements in public are all there on CCTV cameras. We're one thin law away from phone-tapping becoming legal, and the propaganda of fear has us limiting our instincts, to react with anger, to open ourselves out in public places, to even touch other people for fear of being labeled a threat and imprisoned, or sued. The propaganda of the work ethic has us uniformed, clockworked, and instinctively on hold five days a week. Our leisure time is easily filled with screenery, and we lap up the notion of escape when it comes to the annual holiday with no perception of its irony. Such is the progress away from a more instinctive natural existence, that when, say, some travelers set up a temporary home almost anywhere in the UK, the only instinct left in the locals is to howl for their removal. Gone is the compassion or understanding or balanced reaction, the very things worn thin in a technocratic society that barely needs them to function. So, it's a mere flip of this doom-laden scenario to re-realize that a society of any type is the people that are in it, and that people are at their best when they cooperate on an instinctive level that recognizes the importance of vitality, equality, and tolerance of difference. That, and the need for 'food and sex and water,' which if constantly available would destroy the need for money and all the monuments to its devastating effect on the human soul."

With their studio work showing leaps and bounds of growth, the band was also working to evolve the other half of life, touring. To coincide with the release of the record, and certainly connected to their new distribution deal for Bluurg via Southern Studios, a tour of the United States was planned.

Dick: "Its release coincided with our first USA tour, and we heard it was at number two in the independent charts. The reviews were at another level of writing, mainly due to the extra-long song, the sort of thing punk bands 'don't do.' The rate at which people were connecting to it, who knows? But a lot of people did."

A small miracle for a band back in those days, the group would do a few shows with the mainstream promoters in California to finance the tour and make coming across possible.

Dick: "Gary Tovar of Goldenvoice rang John Loder as we were in Southern Studios recording *Cradle* and they sorted it all out between them. We did three Goldenvoice gigs on the West Coast. (Our first USA gig was at the Olympic Auditorium in LA, to 3,000 people. We were on another planet! But thankfully they weren't all like that.) We then went through SLC and Denver to the East Coast. It was all about four weeks long, and first impressions were a daily headfuck! Everything was bigger, as the comics had said: the roads, the cops, the buildings, the cars, the attitude, and the crowds at gigs. Aside of musical backgrounds (we were all Pistols and Clash, they were all DKs and Black Flag), the scenes seemed similar, some huge (the big cities), some small (Kansas, e.g.). The drinking laws and cops with guns were both freaky, discovering pizzas and burritos and chilies was excellent, meeting all sorts of punks was an amazing experience. American-ness? Well, back home only a few punks had cars. Here they all had one, or even two. Some of the parental homes punks put us up in for the night were like palatial, and I'm sure some sofas never recovered from our aromatic contact!"

The tour was a major coup in both breaking the US hardcore audience, as well as meeting some of the right people. Via a very popular interview in *Flipside* fanzine, the group was also able to get their ideas out. Stories of stolen leather jackets and broken glasses (both Dick's of course) became legend. The group was taking on status in the States of some of the biggest punk bands. Soon every punk mail-order and boutique had a selection of bootleg Subhumans T-shirts.

Dick: "Never saw a penny. We had no idea!"

The early '80s were a time of street protest and rioting. With much of the upheaval spontaneous events triggered by years of anxiety, more coordinated efforts were also underfoot. The Stop The City campaign of 1983 and 1984 was an attempt at direct action used at the heart of capitalism. Rather than focusing on single issues, "symptoms" in leftist speak, the protests were aimed at the cause, blockading and successfully shutting down the financial center of London. It was soon obvious that attacking the very thing the system valued most, capital, was equivalent to striking at the beehive in the garden. Of the 3,000 supporters of the cause, over a third were subsequently arrested with various degrees of force.

Dick: "There were amazing demonstrations of people being able to coordinate to halt, for a while, the everyday business routine of the financial

Photo below by Karoline Collins

bloodsuckers at the heart of the capital. Thousands of us with no instructions or plans took over the streets around the Stock Exchange, blocked the traffic, talked to the workers [or shouted back], and reveled in the proper sense of the word."

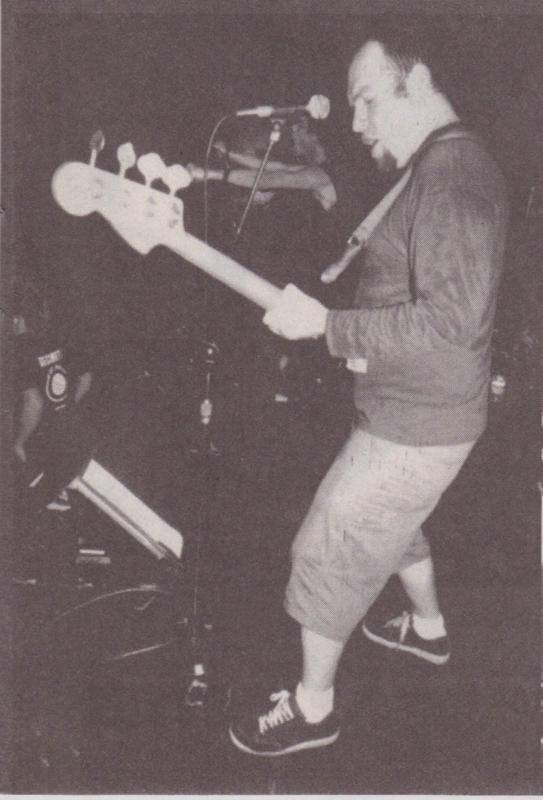
Germinating in part from the anarcho punk community, these protests, as futile as they may have seemed at the time, would go on to inspire a wave of punk activism, especially the War Chest Tours in San Francisco the following year. Needless to say, the Subhumans were affected by what was happening and would respond. The result was 1984's *Rats* EP. Ending with the band's strongest song to date, the four-track 7" would be the group's solitary release of that year. Fully realizing their interest in reggae on the song "When The Bomb Drops," the band showed that their constant touring was paying off: they were now able to hit at drastically different forms of music without it sounding like a punky mutation. But the garage band mentality is still the power behind what some think of as the band's best EP. The title track that closes the album not only captures a common sentiment felt about the Stop The City campaigns, but also is to that point the group's most equal division of power and melody.

"If you act like rats you get treated like this"
Said a policeman like we didn't exist
When the force of law has lost its head
The law of force is what you get

Dick: "It was a very strong song, and based on the experience had at the Stop the City marches in London, where hordes of us had managed by strength of numbers and inspired cunning to halt the financial center of 'The City,' the area in central London where all the banks HQs and the Stock Exchange are."

With no other plans to record that year, *Rats* would wind up on several compilations, including *We Don't Want Your Fucking War* on Mortarhate offshoot Fight Back Records, and the *P.E.A.C.E.* double LP put out by MDC's RRadical Records.

All photos this page by Karoline Collins



Dick: "It was relevant, and a new good recording."

In April of 1985, the group had a new set of material. Opting not to go to London, the group decided to record in Woodland Studios in Castleford.

Dick: "We wanted a change, and had been recommended Woodlands by the Instigators, who recorded there and knew the engineer well."

Worlds Apart was musically the perfect follow-up to *Cradle*. Having done the big thing on the previous record, the group could now spread out in any musical direction. Jamaican "rockers" appeared everywhere, and not only in a pseudo-reggae framework. Much more busy bass playing along with confident drumming made for a powerful rhythm section that would in some ways precede the advanced playing of groups like No Means No. The guitar playing could switch from hardcore bar chords to flavorful, almost '60s-inspired solo work.

Dick: "*Cradle* was a big idea that worked, and we didn't think a song could get 'bigger' than that, so we didn't feel any pressure in that direction. I mean, we'd done that. The songs on *Worlds Apart* were a challenge, with different structures we'd not had before, Bruce's reach was getting further out there. I remember the layers of guitars took ages to record, and Bruce's perfectionism seemed at some points to be approaching obsession! But results speak for themselves."

The band's most perfect musical statement, there was a feeling of finality to the album. Especially in hindsight, the record seems like both the culmination of what they had been hinting at for years, but also like the end of an era.

Lyrically, the record was resolute. This record seems to find the perfect balance between criticisms of the movement while still being angry at the world outside. The Subhumans never settled down. Songs like "Ex-Teenage Rebel" and "Powergames" seem almost like responses to "Waste Of Breath." The frustrations of the past were becoming more and more solidified by the time *Worlds Apart* was being written.

And I tell you that you are the problem
Which is why you can't see it no more
The strength of us all could demolish the wall
But you chose to walk through the door

Dick: "Punks met over and over again, who would reiterate their cry of being a punk 'forever,' 'until I die,' and so on, then two years later would join the police, the army, or just go all businessman. It was annoying and saddening. And elitism in the scene, where anyone who looked different from those who professed to look different was shunned. With all the cries for Unity and Equality, there was a stupid amount of petty squabbling over surface appearance."

In other areas, songs were still sounding, like the angry young men with "British Disease" and "Heads Of State" taking aim at the governmental structures they were born to and were fighting. "Apathy," the track most reminiscent of the group's hardcore origins, is a comparative list of society's causes and effects.

Drink, sex, cigarettes
Ford Cortina, household pets
Bombs, war, famine, death
An apathetic public couldn't care less

But perhaps the conclusive mood of the record has something to do with the most soul searching, existential tracks. Questioning the system that lead to so much death could only result in equally compelling questions about life, as in songs like "Straightline Thinking" and "Fade Away."

We live we die
In fear of gods and guns

And never knowing why
Why must we some day die

An unassailably solid effort, the disaffected nature of the band pointed towards an inevitable end.

Dick: "Our diverging thoughts about the punk scene at this point were foundations, in a way, for the eventual split nine months later, inasmuch as we were split between considering the scene to be pottering along quite nicely (yes, bands were splitting up, but others were forming), or falling apart into a future of less—gigs, originality, progress and enjoyment. Not that we discussed this until nine months later. I seem to recall there was a slight murmur of 'not fast enough' from the thrash-heads, but generally people liked it a lot."

With the release of the record a few months later, the group hit the road with another venture over the pond.

Dick: "It was all over the USA, all with Scream and a few in Canada with TSOL, a couple with the DKs. The response was huge, generally, and Scream were ace people to be touring with.

"After we played at WDC 930 Club, Pea Soup came onstage to do a rare gig. This was Ian MacKaye and Joey P and (sorry I forget) playing funky-punk rock. (Name-drops are a crap read, aren't they?) We did the longest between-gigs drive ever, from Florida to Ohio, overnight. To keep myself and the driver awake I practiced saying the alphabet backwards until I had it down to three seconds. A few of us got very feverish after the Detroit gig, and how extra fun was traveling in a U-Haul trailer at that point? Pete the Roadie's 12" mohican had the traders in a large indoor market in Chicago all clapping and yelling. And we were summarily expelled from a casino for just looking wrong."

But the expressed frustrations of *Worlds Apart* would come to fruition after a couple of UK gigs. No place can get you down like home.

Dick: "We did quite a lot of gigs before splitting, including a whole European tour; but after a couple of UK gigs after the US tour, which were by comparison a bit shite (blood and drunkenness, broken windows), Trotsky announced he'd be leaving after the European tour (which was already set up).

"We all got together for a chat after that tour, and whereas I was thinking along the lines of 'get a new drummer' (not easy but not impossible), the others were leaning towards letting it all go as well. Oh? Oh. A general feeling that we were playing to a diminishing scene was leading to suggestions of playing to and for a different crowd, with much heavier music, something I couldn't envisage at all. There was no formal decision to split, but a decision to take a break, after recording what songs we had left—which, with some extras, became *29:29 Split Vision*."

By the end of the year, the group had split. But they did manage to remain visible for another year. Before the breakup, the group had reissued the first four 7"s as the *EPLP* full length on Bluurg.

Dick: "It came out after the split, but it was planned anyway, because the first four EPs (*Rats* being the fifth) were out of print."

The following year, the final recordings were released as *29:29 Split Vision*.

Dick: "It went, this album is 29 minutes and 29 seconds long (er, almost), and 29:29 sounds like 20:20 as in 20:20 split vision—er, lets call it that! Not a lot of thought went into it, or the cover. By the time we had to get the artwork done I was in Culture Shock, and Bruce and Trotsky and Phil were experimenting with what became Switch, so our concentration was divided."

The record was split with the more upbeat and punkier songs on one side, and the other more explorations of different musical styles.

Dick: "Basically the A side is songs we'd played live—except for "Somebody's Mother"—and which had been around for a while, and the B side is the totally new songs, which are very different in style from anything before."

With the constant schedule of touring and recording, the group had partially been running on inertia. With the decompression beginning, the muso side of the band eventually started playing together as Switch. Within a month of the Subhumans' December split, Dick was back writing lyrics again, fronting the more obviously ska-influenced Culture Shock. With Nigel from A-Heads on guitar and Bill from Organized Chaos on drums, the group was soon gigging and planning its first 12". After the *Go Wild* 12" and the excellent *Onwards and Upwards* LP, bassist Paul left the group to be replaced with former Rhythmite, Jasper. After one last LP titled *All The Time!* the band split for good in the summer of '89. Sadly, Nigel would pass away four years later. Bringing Jasper along, Dick quickly started Citizen Fish, reuniting him with Trotsky on drums and eventually Phil on guitar.

Despite a series of popular and varied Citizen Fish records, there was still a demand for the unique musical and lyrical approach of the Subhumans. Unlike many other bands of the time, their skill level both in writing and performance left them impossible to copy. After a couple of one-off reunion show benefits, the group reformed full-time with touring and recording. With Citizen Fish also still active, the two bands endure. With a new generation of bands and audiences to demystify, Dick and company are still the most closely connected, at least philosophically, to their origins some 25+ years ago.

Both photos below by Karoline Collins

TRANZMITORS

I recently sat down with Tranzmitors drummer Bryce Dunn and singer/guitarist Jeff McCloy, prior to the recording of their first self-titled release on Deranged Records.

Interview by Matt. Photos by Bella Bombshella.

MRR: The term "super group" has been tossed around a lot in reference to your band because the Tranzmitors kind of came out of the ashes of other projects, right?
Bryce: The formation of the Tranzmitors really started after the Newtown Animals broke up because Jeff still had a lot of songs that he wanted to do.
Jeff: Yeah, initially we were going to play a Clones show (Jeff released an album under the name Jeffie Genetic and his Clones). I don't even think we got through one practice before we decided it was going to be a new band.
Bryce: Yeah, and we already had show offers after two practices, and it just added to our knowing we were going to be a band. So it did fall together rather quickly because it didn't take long for us to start playing live. From that point, it was clear that that's what we were going to do.

MRR: And the name and everything came up right way?
Bryce: Yeah, Fergus came up with the name and we started practicing in the winter of 2004.
Jeff: And the first show was March 2005.

MRR: So the songs from those initial practices made up the first three singles you released?
Bryce: The first song we did was "Teenage Tragedy," which is the fourth single that's coming out soon.

MRR: When you go into the studio next week that'll be the first time without Fergus?
Bryce: When we release the two new singles on Deranged and Seeing Eye we'll have all the songs with Fergus on them out, and when we go into the studio next week it'll be the first time we'll record with the new lineup and the songs will be "Fergus-less."

MRR: And the new members of the band?
Jeff: Tyler Mounteney and Jarrod O'Dell are in this great band called The Parallels. I'd been going to see them for awhile, and when we were trying to put things together, the idea of just getting another bass player didn't make sense. So we thought, why not reinvent the band, because we'd already been recording and adding so much organ and piano that it just made sense to add a keyboard player.

MRR: Was it a conscious decision to release all the singles as 7"s before the record comes out?
Jeff: Yeah, it was totally intentional to release a whole slew of singles before the record came out, because double A-side singles are the way to go!
Bryce: It's a marketable format. As much as people may not think it's accessible, the single is what gives the first impression to someone who listens to the band. That's why, in the '60s, the single was the make-it-or-break-it point for a group and the limited printing is half the allure of the single. If you don't get them the first time around...

MRR: So you can start your own eBay business?
Jeff: Well, yeah, it was totally ridiculous. The day after the first two singles came out, both those singles were up on eBay.

MRR: Were you surprised how quickly they sold?
Bryce: Yeah, definitely. It's really weird when you find bloggers, like this guy in Australia I found who reviewed the record, and you're like, how does it get out there? I mean, you didn't even think about that, you're focused on your immediate area.
Jeff: Seven-inches are totally popular right now.

MRR: It is kind of astonishing. It seems like all these sites are pushing the singles as "super rare."
Jeff: The singles don't have anything on them and that was on purpose. We didn't want to have any info because we didn't want this band to be connected to our earlier bands. We wanted it to be treated as its own band, so therefore all the singles had no pictures of the band members, there was nothing. So when *Look What You're Doing to Me* and *Bigger Houses, Broken Homes* came out there was no info on them and people were trying to figure out if this was a new band or an old band, and on eBay we were listed as an old band.

MRR: If you didn't live in Vancouver, how would you know?
Jeff: Aesthetically, I wanted them to look like old records and that was totally on purpose, because I think records look good like that.

MRR: But on the album cover are you going to give out any more information?
Jeff: Yeah, this is our coming out, it's going to be like Kiss *Unmasked*. There's going to be a big picture of us.

MRR: Very serious-looking.
Jeff: This is serious stuff.

MRR: But I thought it was "Jerry Lewis meets the Buzzcocks." (This quote is from their myspace page.)
Jeff: That's Bryce's concept of the band.
Bryce: The reason I said that is because I think there's certain a comedic element to this band and I think it comes from—

MRR: Well, definitely there is at your shows.
Jeff: What are you saying?

MRR: There's lots of banter at your shows in between songs.
Jeff: Well, I don't like the way it's been going lately, because initially it was just me being funny and sharing my sense of wit with the world, and now it's changed to the band choosing to make fun of me. That's the direction it's been heading.

MRR: That means everyone gets something funny to say.
Jeff: 99% of the crowd and the band gets to enjoy it and the only other person—me—gets to feel, you know…

MRR: Is this what happened on the last tour, where you'd throw out one of your jokes and boom!—they'd all bomb?
Jeff: Yeah, every single one got turned around from joke *by* Jeff to joke *on* Jeff—that was the whole tour, it was relentless.
Bryce: We have to have a support system because if Jeff was telling jokes all the time, we'd have to have people like Nick Thomas to keep our reputation as entertainers.
Jeff: I think he does it to entertain himself.
Bryce: Well the "Teen Man" story is quite good.
Jeff: And no one in Vancouver has heard the "Teen Man" story.

MRR: Well, let's have it.
Jeff: No, no, no, you have to wait until you see us. That's all we got right now and it's only funny at the show. A reason to see the band: you get the "Teen Man" story.
Bryce: People will come from far and wide, across great expanses, saying, "Tell us the 'Teen Man' story!"
Jeff: Yeah, then they come, hear it, and file out the door. "Did you want to hear the 'Teen Man' song?" "No, just the story, thanks."

MRR: With hecklers at your shows, I was at one where people were yelling at you to "stop being so British."
Jeff: Yeah, that was good. Well, fuck, what do those people expect? How do they want the band to sound? We're supposed to sound like that. We're from Canada.

MRR: You're from the farthest west point of Canada and you're trying to sound like you're from the farthest west point of—
Jeff: The farthest west point of London! Fake accents, that's half the fun, especially if you're singing. Can you imagine singing with some nondescript accent? That's what Canadian bands sound like. They sound like they're on some bland television show. Well, it's not like anyone is up there talking with fake accents.

MRR: So you break character for your jokes?
Jeff: Yeah, but when you're singing, it's all British all the way. My favorite records sound like that so that's why I sound like that; you want to sound like your favorite records. What about all those British bands that sang without their accents and tried to sing like some old soul singer? We're evening the score.

MRR: Aside from hecklers, don't you think a lot of the people who come to your shows are crusty and Oi punks? Why do you think you're so popular? It seems like crusty kids would be disdainful of power pop.
Jeff: I think it's the complete opposite. There's a total crossover right now with all the punky kids. Everyone seems to like a bit of everything.
Bryce: Yeah, there's a willingness to accept that the world is not all doom and gloom, and those kids are just looking for something new to listen to.
Jeff: Before the only way to find new bands was if they were circulating amongst those scenes. It wasn't like they were easily accessible. Now you can find anything really easily. Unless you hung out with the goofy mod kids you didn't get to find out about any of those power pop or mod records because no one had them except those people. Now everybody has everything and it doesn't matter where you come from, I guess.
Bryce: I think it's more just the sound of the band. I mean, in Vancouver, there's nobody doing what we're doing right now.

MRR: As opposed to some of the bands around Vancouver right now, groups like Black Mountain where East-Van hipster kids with beards ride their bikes to the gigs, and then there's you guys.
Bryce: That's why there was a conscious decision when we started this band that—
Jeff: No one was to have a beard.

MRR: Or a bike.
Jeff: You can scooter, or if you do bike, it can't have a basket.
Bryce: As far as the sound of the band and why certain kids will listen to us or be interested in the band goes, I don't think it's as much of an influence as it is a sound in general because again, there are not a lot of bands embracing that sound right now. There was a surge in power pop bands with groups like the Exploding Hearts.
Jeff: That record is just bubblegum at its best.

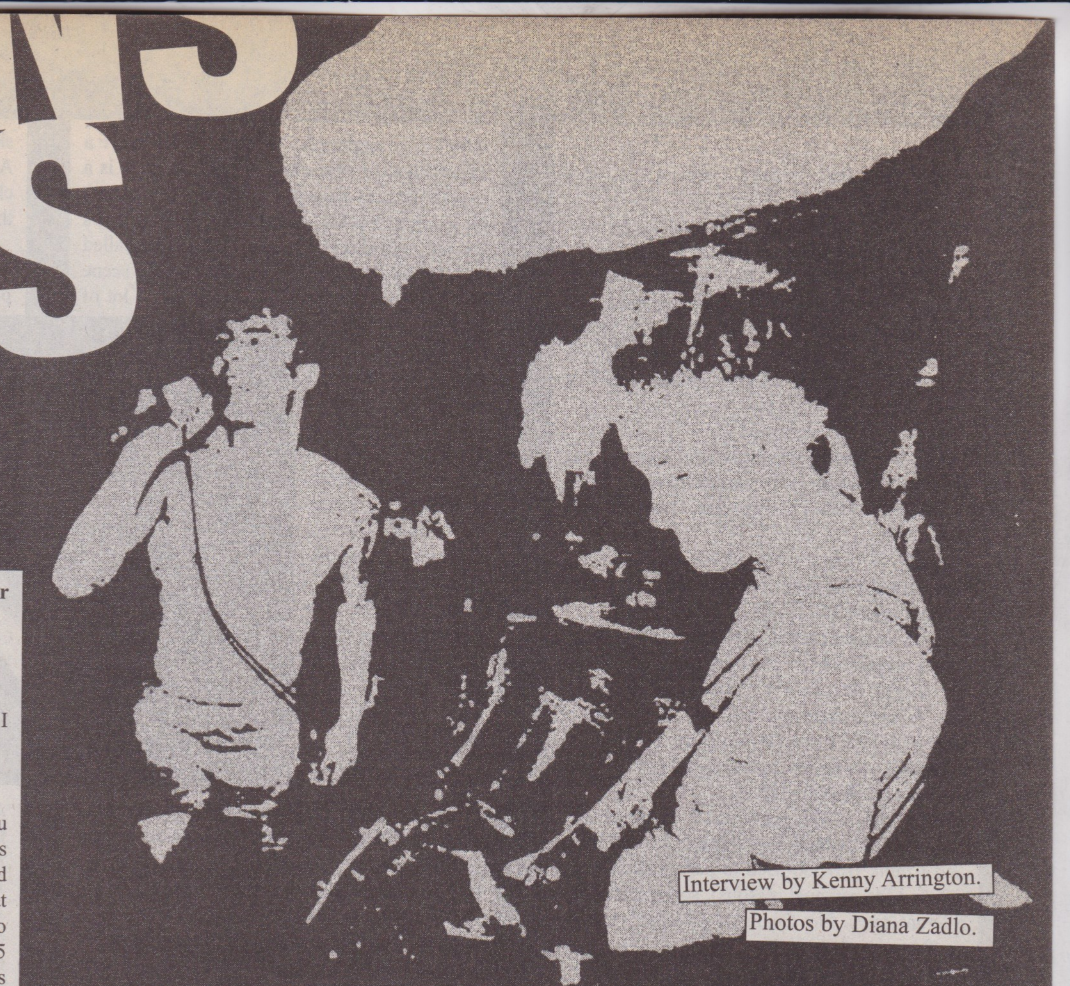
MRR: But now there are a few bands like that, but not in Vancouver, or even Canada for that matter.
Bryce: Yeah, not in Canada. I can't really think of any right now.
Jeff: If any band is responsible for building up that scene it's the Briefs, because they're such relentless tourers.

MRR: Speaking of which, any future tours planned?
Bryce: The full-length should be out by January at the latest and we're likely going to do another tour of Western Canada and possibly a tour down the West Coast.

MRR: And right now you have something in the works with the CBC (Canadian Public Television). What are you guys doing with them?
Bryce: I got approached by a producer of a new sitcom. It's called *This Space for Rent* and it's supposed to be five twenty-somethings all living together.

MRR: It's a Canadian *Friends*.
Jeff: Ha! Yeah, the soundtrack to the Canadian *Friends*.
Bryce: 'Cause that's what we want to be known for—that band that wrote the theme to that show…

ANS



Interview by Kenny Arrington.

Photos by Diana Zadlo.

MRR: Role call, dudes. Give me your loser road nicknames and role in the band.
Joe: Hobo Joe, and I play drums.
Jimmy: MaoFish, guitar.
Andrew: Ill Kim or The Illness. I play bass.
Chris: Captain Party (CP85) or Der Fuhrer. I sing.

MRR: How long have you been a band?
Chris: From the beginning of everything, you could say we've been around for seven years total. From 1999 to 2003 we were called Defaced, and we put out three CDs under that name. In late 2003, we changed our name to ANS because there was something like 15 bands named Defaced. We're the same dudes and everything, we just have a new name. Besides, we had felt that over the course of the previous four years we had changed the message and feeling of the band, so a name change felt justified. The CD *Success at Last* has rerecorded versions of all the early Defaced material, but everything else we had from those first few years is out of print.

MRR: So how did you come up with the name ANS?
Chris: I'm actually the only member still around that can answer that! I was playing guitar on the floor and I looked under my bed at the 20 or so Old Skool Vans shoe boxes under my bed, and you know how the V is just a radical sign over the A-N-S? Well, I thought it was rad, so we just changed it to that. We don't really delve into what it stands for too much—sort of like TSOL and JFA—but truth be known, Annihilate New School is the official meaning—or Heinous Anus.

MRR: You had a major lineup change in 2005. What happened?
Chris: I really don't know. We came back from our summer tour, and everything was great! But then Nathan and Danny (then bassist and drummer) just started flaking. Nathan sold our van for pocket change, then they both started talking about joining the Army, and they couldn't find time to practice or play. So that was that, and we replaced them.
Jimmy: The other guys were great, but they just had other shit to deal with; not everyone can deal with constant sacrifice and touring.

MRR: How is the new lineup working?
Chris: Great! It's a lot more fun. We all skate avidly, which the old dudes didn't do much of, so that alone makes shit better. Band skating is like group therapy, y'know? It keeps us all from going crazy.
Jimmy: Things definitely feel more positive. It's just good to have committed members behind the music.

MRR: The tour edition of the *Pool* LP was so sick! Silk-screened and grip taped covers! How did you make that happen?
Andrew: Screening the jackets was easy. The grip tape was the tough part.
Chris: I had ganked several rolls of grip tape from the skatepark where I worked, so we'd go out to Jimmy's place and roll out these 200-foot-long rolls of grip and spray paint them all weird. Then we'd go inside, cut the grip into 12-inch sections, stick the grip, then cut the grip all into scraps being used for old school grip tape designs on some records. Then we'd stencil ANS on the grip tape and start over on another record. Repeat that 350 times.
Joe: Yeah, that sucked a lot, but it was a good time. Grip tape parties till 5:00 a.m.! Woo hoo!
Andrew: It took us a really long time. I cut my finger up with a razorblade pretty badly gripping one jacket, so I wrote my name in blood on the back. I think we sold that record to a kid in Rochester.

MRR: You toured Japan in 2005 with only one 7" out, is that correct?
Chris: Not exactly. We went to Japan in March 2005 and we didn't have that 7" out until August of that year. At the time, we had two CDs out, *Success at Last* and the *Pool* EP, but that was about it.
Jimmy: We sort of did it as a "Why the hell not?" thing. Hell, we hadn't even toured the full USA at that point.

MRR: So how was that? A lot of true dudes out there?
Chris: Man, Japan is the coolest place on Earth. The people are so kind and respectful. They are beyond hospitable, and considering the language barrier we had to deal with, I'm amazed that we found a place every night without any pre-planning.

MRR: Is that where you guys met Deadpoint?
Chris: Yeah, those dudes are amazingly true. We met them at our first show at this skatepark overlooking Mt. Fuji. They were so fucking crazy, screaming about John Gibson and Craig Johnson, all these old school Texas vert pros. They'd grab their board and go into a Texas-plant, just screaming "Motha fucking Texas!" It was surreal.

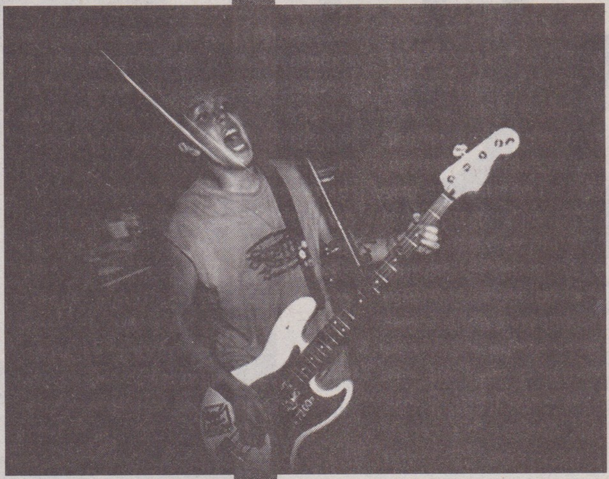
MRR: You guys party hard and I know that firsthand. You recently toured Europe with I Object and their PC lifestyles. How did that turn out?
Andrew: It didn't really affect me because I don't drink or do drugs or anything so I was just having fun 24/7!
Chris: I wouldn't say their PC lifestyle is in any way a negativism. We're different people, but we can still get down together.
Joe: At times there was a little stress, but over the entire tour there was no clash between us, especially not involving our being partiers and their not being partiers.
Chris: Yeah, if we really had a disagreement, partying had nothing to do with it. I know Ryan and I think Biff too used to party (which they stopped for personal reasons), so they are very tolerant guys. No Chain of Strength crap or anything.
Joe: Chain of Strength rules!
Jimmy: The tour was great. We are too good friends to let trivial shit come between us.

MRR: How have people responded to your music? It reminds me a lot of mid-'80s JFA.
Chris: Yeah, skateboards and having fun. Punk rock is just the soundtrack to the session. A lot of my old school skate buddies claim it really takes them back to their early days listening to DI, Agression, and skating desert fullpipes.
Andrew: The shows are always fun, but the pre/post-show skate sessions are where it's at!

MRR: You all skate to the max and have toured a few times. What have been your favorite places to skate outside of Texas?
Joe: Indian School ditch in Albuquerque, Berkeley Park in Berkeley, Burnside in Portland, the Skatepark of Tampa for the four days we snaked that bowl, and the Wormhole in Worcester.
Chris: Texas is always one of the best places to skate ditches and pools. But I second all of Joe's answers. I really loved skating Louisville park in Kentucky, and I really want to get out to that new park in Indiana with the two fullpipes at an elbow.

Andrew: Kansas City VaHalla House. That ramp is so sick!
Chris: "Epic" is the word.
Jimmy: I think I'm still draining fluid out of my hip from that session.

MRR: What is the Texas scene like?
Joe: The north Texas scene, Dallas/Fort Worth, is sort of struggling at the moment. There are a lot of amazing bands and shows, but there is a serious lack of consistent crowds. It's always hit or miss. No big deal though. Austin shows are rad, and there is a new DIY venue called 423 Tillery that is really building up the scene around there. San Antonio is cool, but a lot of venues are closing, so hopefully the scene keeps its head above water. Houston is always great, but there are a lot of good bands breaking up to start new bands, so it sucks, but it's positive. Right now it's just a time of turnover down there. South Texas is always shit.



Jimmy: Whatever it is, it's home.
Chris: El Paso is shit. Don't go there. Pretty much everything west of Fort Worth is sketchy. There are some rad dudes up in Lubbock, over in San Angelo, and down in Corpus Christi but overall the scenes are small, so shows are hard to depend on.
Andrew: Ups and downs, y'know? Some shows are good, others are bad. I don't really see it as negative at all. The scene has never felt more fun!

MRR: Are you down with the GCHC dudes?
Joe: Sure, why not.
Chris: Yeah, we love our GCHC brethren! The PMRC, No Comply, Reason of Insanity, Insect Warfare—all those dudes.

MRR: Name a few bands that influence you!
Joe: I don't know, man, it just depends on my mood.
Andrew: Morning Glory, Against All Authority, and other shit, but those are some big ones.
Jimmy: Surf, and lots of it.
Chris: Yeah, sometimes all I want to listen to is Agression, but I love listening to a lot of junk—Ice-T, John Coltrane, Dick Dale and the Ventures, Muddy Waters, and JFA.

MRR: What are some bands that you're listening to these days, and who would you recommend for any thrasher to check out?
Joe: Motha fuckin' Christ on a Crutch. Check it.
Chris: I'm still listening to a lot of the records I picked up on tour, but I'm really stoked on BLAST!, Jerry's Kids, and Scholastic Deth. For newer rad bands, everyone should check out Sunpower (Belgium), Hit Me Back, Defect Defect, Rabies, HIV, No Comply, and Rat Byte—all of who seriously bring the skate.
Andrew: The Ergs are a really rad band to check out for sure. Descendents, ALL, stuff like that.

MRR: Joe plays in Opposite of God, a "ripping hardcore thrash band." Anyone else play in other bands besides ANS?
Andrew: Not really. Some working projects, but nothing serious.

MRR: Crust or no crust on the pizza? And with or without the song "Pull Your Dick Out" playing really loud?
Andrew: Can I get some dick on the pizza?
Jimmy: Dick is provided.
Joe: Crust if it's stuffed crust, and PYDO blaring at 11.
Chris: Mondo-mongo-crust, with the dick whipped out, chanting PYDO.

MRR: You now have three 7's out, a full length CD, a few cassettes, and a four-way split LP. Any new music planned for the future?
Joe: Like 12 other records or something.
Andrew: Ha, yeah, if Chris has his way.
Chris: Well, we do have a lot of shit to do in the next year. We plan on having a one-sided 7" out this winter, a full length LP out in the spring, represses of *The Pool* as LP/CD, another Malaysian cassette, a comp cassette of *The Pool* and *Romancing the Phone*, and I think a discography cassette on Gnarly Slaughter.

MRR: So what are your future plans? Are there tours to come?
Joe: Japan in the spring and USA/Europe in the summer. Maybe Alaska one day. It's all tentative, but hopefully we can make it happen. South America anyone?
Andrew: Possible Annihilation Time southern USA tour?
Chris: South America would be sick. It'll be sick to be back in Japan though, to see old friends and Skate-Hooligan the Far East.
Jimmy: Maybe eat more horse this time around.

MRR: Anything else you dudes would like say?
Andrew: I got nothing.
Joe: Have fun, party hard, and, uh, go to school naked.
Jimmy: Taste that ramp—it tastes so good.
Chris: The Big Boys will live on forever. Fun Fun Fun! Get out there and skate!

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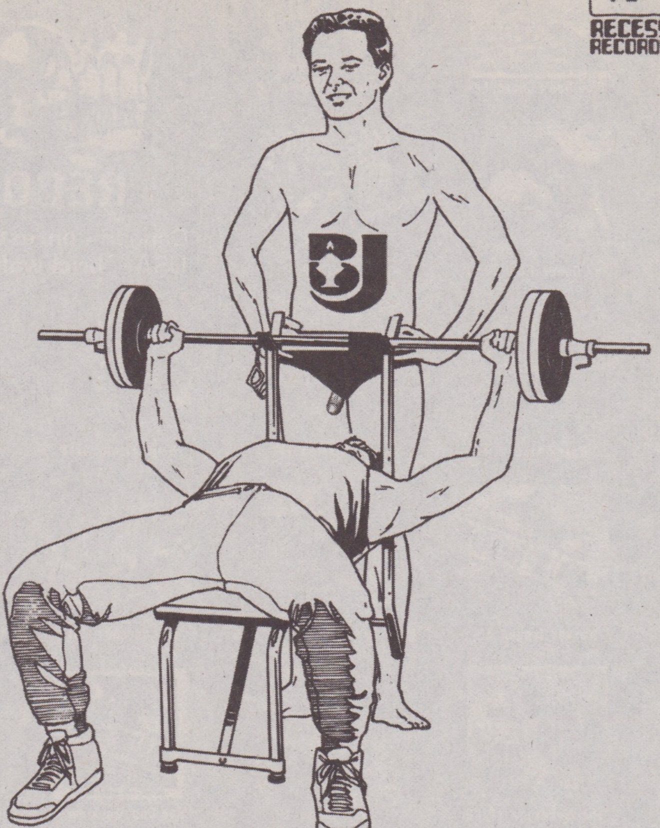

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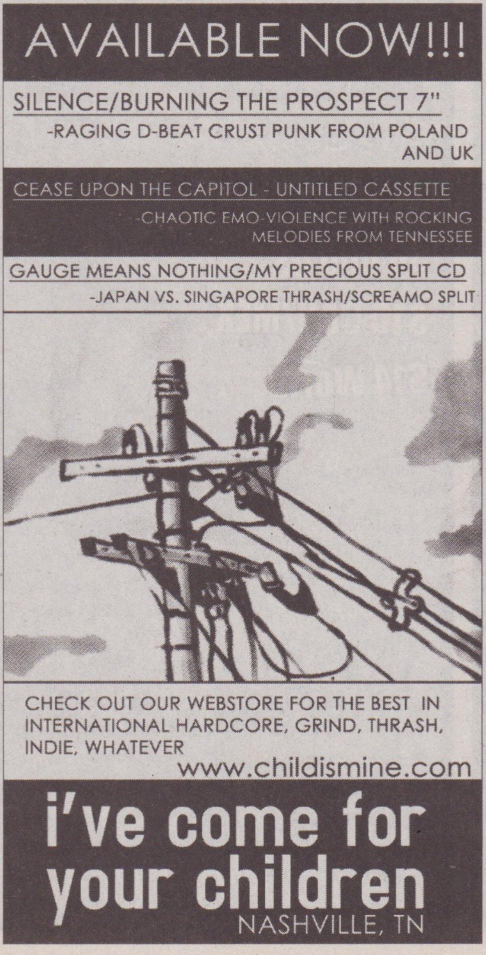

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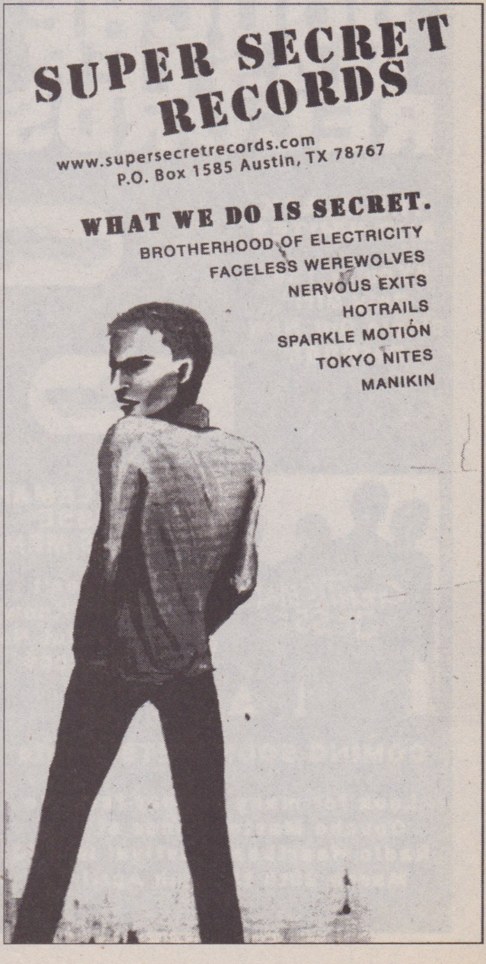

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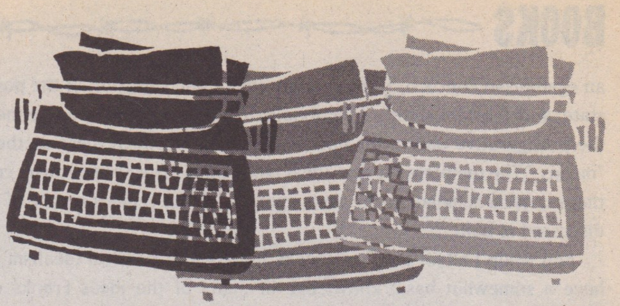
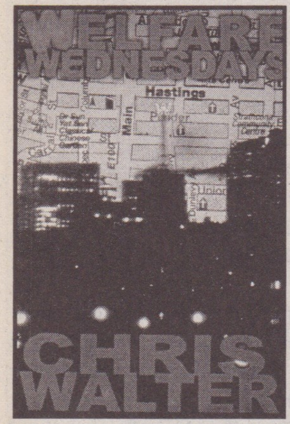




Welfare Wednesdays
Chris Walter
$16 • 268 pages
Gofuckyerself Press
www.punkbooks.com

Like Philly's Active Bladder and Austin's Layman Books, Vancouver's GFY Press is a small, author-run punk publishing house chock full of vibrant, adventurous, well-written books. All three publishers have extremely skilled writers who've come out of the punk scene: Johnny Ostentatious, Charles Romalotti, and GFY's Chris Walter. Walter, unlike the other two authors, sets his novels in the gutters and flophouses of East Vancouver. It's a grimy world populated by alcoholics, junkies, crack heads, and prostitutes. For us US readers, East Vancouver sounds like it's an equivalent neighborhood to San Francisco's Tenderloin or to the historical NYC slums like the Bowery and Harlem.

In many ways, Walter reminds me of black writer Donald Goines. Goines grew up in Detroit, did time, and was a thief, a heroin addict, and a pimp. He and his wife were shot to death in a still-unsolved shooting in 1974. Goines' hard-boiled prose took Bukowski one step further and bluntly chronicled violent despair-filled street life. While it's unclear if Walter has ever been a pimp (and he's very much alive), his ability to unflinchingly show the incredibly seedy underbelly of life in the poorest part of town is almost identical to Goines clear-eyed talent.

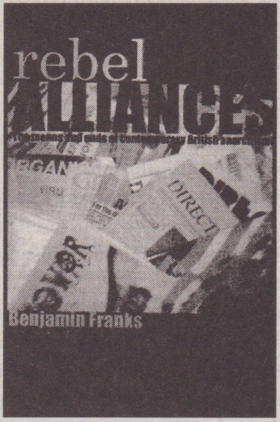
There's one area—heroin abuse—where Walter is actually more skilled than Goines. The only Goines book I wasn't able to read all the way through was "Dopefiend." By the end of the first chapter a junkie had hooked his innocent little sister on heroin with the promise of further degradation and misery to follow. When that level of junk-fueled pathos enters into a book, the inevitable death and heartbreak that heroin brings (even to fictional characters) depresses me and I never finish the book. Walter is different—*Welfare Wednesdays* is full of hopeless addicts (mostly crack, but there's some heroin too) who shoot up or smoke rock behind dumpsters and in dingy SRO hotel rooms. But somehow he's able to inject (pun intended) a slight bit of hope into his characters constant efforts to survive their addiction.

Part of my sensitivity to frank prose about heroin is the list of friends and acquaintances who've either died or almost died from the stuff. I'm not anti-drug. In fact, I think drug legalization should be the law of the land. Books like *Welfare Wednesday* and *Dopefiend*, however, show how easy it is for any of us reading this *MRR* to slide into addiction. No intelligent person says "boy, I'm gonna become a junkie"—they all say "I'll be fine with it, that'll never happen to me." One punk I know survived watching others screw up their lives with junk for more than a decade, yet one day he met the wrong person and ended up hooked for a few harrowing years. He survived, but many of us don't. The same goes for the ubiquitousness of alcohol—while I love a drink as much as most of you, I've also dropped off and picked up hundreds of alcoholics at dialysis treatment when I worked for paratransit. Books like this show where thoughtless romanticizing of heroin and booze can land us. That's not preaching, that's fucking reality.

Don't get me wrong, *Welfare Wednesdays* is not a depressing book—it's almost constantly optimistic even as the characters trudge through the chilly rain pushing a shopping cart, dumpster diving for things to sell for crack. Walter's breezy style somehow fits well with his unerring exposure of the repulsive reality his characters inhabit. Somehow, this thread of optimism runs through the book in spite of the oppressive, grinding brutality of dead-end lives and hour-to-hour poverty of his story. I returned to this book again and again, eager to read how the characters would screw over themselves or others, while rooting for them to get their shit together.

Welfare Wednesdays proves that Chris Walter is one of the underground's leading fiction writers, along with Michael Muhammad Knight, Charles Romalotti, and Aaron Cometbus.

—Jesse Luscious



Rebel Alliances: The Means and Ends of Contemporary British Anarchisms
Benjamin Franks
475 pages • $19.95
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www.akpress.org

I've almost completely given up on concerning myself with politics for the simple fact that they tend to do a much better job aggravating me than contributing any wellbeing or fulfillment to the little world I live in. The far left has a frequent tendency (as does the far right) to obsess over their own hypothetical utopian goals way beyond the point of reason, an unfortunate reality that taints an otherwise sensible series of (so-called) movements or political ideologies. You know what I'm basically saying: people become what they hate. This idealist custom scarred my face horribly and has for years forced me to wear a mask of dream-like escapism in my hybernetic chrysalis of neurosis...it's just easier this way. So naturally I was very reluctant to accept the assignment of "the means and ends of contemporary British anarchism," expecting opinionated diatribes (which there weren't), fallacies upon fallacies (debatable), the deification of the Situationists (maybe a *little*) and enough acronyms to choke on (yes!)... I'm not always right about everything you know.

The title refers to the rather large amount of contemporary anarchist organizations of significance in the United Kingdom. The book is structured so that most of the explanation is handled through chapters dealing with the ethical/moral, organizational and tactical specifics and is not handled on a group-by-group type basis. It's a format that works, though at the end of the book I can't help but notice that most of the information handled wasn't specific to Britain or even contemporary in nature. Slightly edited, *Rebel Alliances* could function on it's own as a primer on the origins of modern anarchism, and it's hard not to look at it as such.

Franks begins by establishing a "hesitantly proposed" series of four criteria to give form and define the organizations and tactics discussed throughout the book: 1) the rejection of capitalism based on an essentially Marxist analysis, 2)

an egalitarian concern, 3) the renouncement and rejection of the powers of the state, and 4) establishing a functional critical paradigm to analyze methods, and the prefigurative nature (or not) of the "end" to which these methods are the "means." The template for the "ideal type" class struggle anarchism created with these criteria is meant as the basis upon which the general nature of each group discussed is built.

And while I admit that I try not to think about political idealism I do in fact have a somewhat basic knowledge of many of the ideas Franks covers, i.e. Leninism, Syndicalism, Anarcho-Syndicalism, Temporary Autonomous Zones, etc etc., but I got the feeling that many of these prerequisites were not sufficiently covered as to make the book appropriate as an introduction to these ideas. An introductory work may very well not be what the author intended, yet I still just feel this should be pointed out. Any thorough explanation of the specifics of Post-anarchism, a central commonality shared by basically all the fucking groups in the book, was nowhere to be found, and I must say was completely inadequate in that regard.

The first chapter lays down a historical framework of anarchism and anarchists in the UK and is probably the most enjoyable section of the whole book (keep in mind that I'm writing this from the perspective of someone who does his best to ignore politics). The second of the five chapters covers the (rather novel) idea of anarchist ethics, explaining the two larger philosophical categories continually referred to through the rest of the book: ethics of the prefigurative nature stressing the importance of the end as it proceeds the means, and secondly the more "means" based Kantian hyper-subjective "deontological" ethical model (Categorical Imperative) that seems to be so popular with all the kids these days. It's nearly impossible to sum up something like deontological ethics into a few pages, but the brief tutorial was done well. Franks' excellent ability to simplify otherwise complex ideas is essential to the success of the book.

At no time does the author attempt to justify or rationalize any of the discussed "deeds" of word or action or examined philosophies, a stance that serves to only widen the books accessibility (and otherwise would have had me puking during the "Tactics" chapter). He objectively deals with the concepts of morality in reference to violence, sabotage, propaganda, etc., without attempting to legitimize any specific position, suggesting instead that any behavior model based on an ethical code is hardly possible.

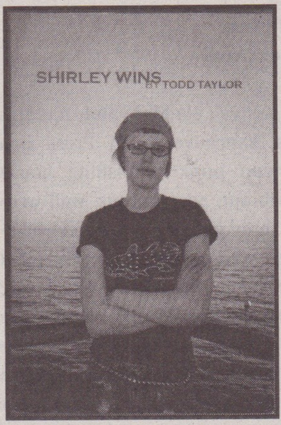
I must admit that I nearly lost it trying to make it through the "agents of change" and "organization" chapters. To be honest it felt like I was staring into a florescent light bulb while listening to an eternal rave loop. But, I guess if you're reading this kinda stuff you've gotta expect it to be pretty damn dry. Analysis of revolutionary structure rarely results in anything more than banality and tedious idealism (keep in mind that *anal* is the first half of the word analysis). I can't but help to think of anarchist organization as a paradox in itself, a problem Franks covers as "Anti-Organization" but still never totally manages to philosophically resolve. The Post-Anarchist (i.e. postmodern anarchism [not post as in "after"-anarchism]) approach he describes solves nothing, and in the end functions only to nullify certainties and leave too much open to interpretation. Any political philosophy is going to need more epistemological structure (but then again that's my interpretation of the concept and shouldn't be confused with the critique of Franks' work).

Despite my negative criticism, the document on a whole is effectual and potent in the sense that quite a lot is covered in such a relatively short book. Franks managed to create an extremely efficient and scientific method of analytic evaluation in the beginning from which the rest of the book stems, qualities I appreciate and frankly enjoy. In fact, the blossoming logic is practically a work of art in it's self and would have made Aristotle proud. And while Franks' style is uniformly (sometimes painfully as I described before) dry through out the 353 pages of actual text, I've gotta admit that I enjoyed the books efficiency at tackling the tough (and seemingly stale) task of giving the relatively fluid and ambiguous idea of anarchism form.

Some more petty complaints are more standard AK Press flaws: an above average number of typos, and shockingly pitiful graphics that look like they were scanned into an Atari 2600. (I've been hypersensitive to AK's typo problem ever since I attempted to use the "index" of their *Realization and Suppression of the Situationist International*... possibly the largest typo in the history of the English language. Pretty pathetic when you consider that the book was supposed to be a work of reference!) I'm old, bitter, and super-judgmental, and hell, I can genuinely recommend *Rebel Alliances* to you if you're interested in learning about anarchism on a more theoretical level than most anarcho-punk records can allow. Actually, I command you to read this book, it'll probably do you some good (It'll at least take your mind off of masturbation for a while.)

The real good news is that it wasn't that waste of paper I had to read last month. MRR doesn't pay me enough cold hard capitalist cash to deal with shit like *Snail Gun* on a monthly basis.

—Spencer Horne



Shirley Wins
Todd Taylor
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PO Box 42024
Los Angeles, CA 90042
www.razorcake.org

Shirley Wins is a book written, by a guy, about a girl and her grandmother. Actually, it is more about a grandmother and her budding love affair with physics. Shirley is a sweet lady who keeps to herself and usually goes about life unnoticed. She spends her time knitting sweaters with bright colors and raising her punk rock granddaughter Rachel, whose mother died giving birth. Rachel loves the Ramones and botony.

Shirley's life changes dramatically after finding an abandoned physics book, and begins spending her time experimenting with ideas inspired by the text. When Shirley stumbles upon an ad for an annual pumpkin launching contest, she decides that she is going to construct a winning pumpkin launcher. After experimenting secretly day after day, Shirley eventually enlists the help of her granddaughter Rachel in her quest to perfect her machine.

The book follows Shirley's experiments step-by-step in a way that the reader always knows where she is at with her project and what she is thinking. Often she doubts her ability to build her machine and questions what is driving her to do it in the first place. Other times she revels in the way science has allowed her to express and fulfill herself in a way that she never knew before. Instead of going through the modest motions of her previous grown-up years, Shirley begins pushing herself in a way that reassures her reason for being on earth.

It's no wonder Shirley is accustomed to doubting herself. Throughout her pumpkin-launcher building she encounters plenty of people who have no idea that she is working on a project of such capacity. When buying materials for her launcher it's usually assumed that she's just buying parts for her husband. Luckily some people are more encouraging, like Rachel who is by her side the whole way.

This book should remind people that with enough work anyone can form a purpose for themselves. It's up to everyone to decide how to fill their time and how what they do defines who they are. I think a lot of people have felt like Shirley at one time or another, that besides work or something they don't have anything of much purpose taking up their time. It's a totally depressing feeling. Feeling useless or insignificant. But Shirley's character will totally inspire you to take on what you love, and spend time doing it, and get good at it, and before you know it it's a part of you and who you are. And, you know, if you love what you do you're probably gonna feel pretty good about yourself too. Reading this book, you're gonna totally grow to like Shirley and Rachel, and when they do awesome stuff you're gonna be really stoked for them too. Maybe it sounds cheezy but whatever, this was just one of those books that makes you feel really good and that's really pretty awesome.

—Cassie Harwood

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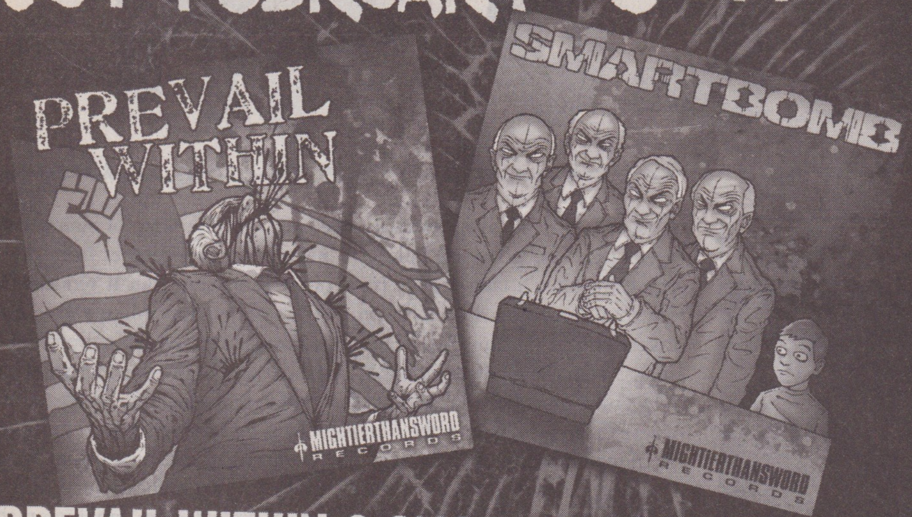

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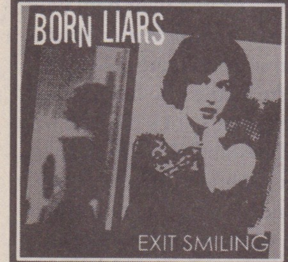

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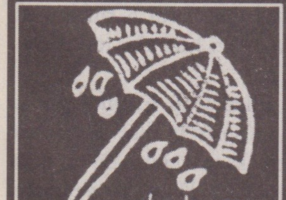

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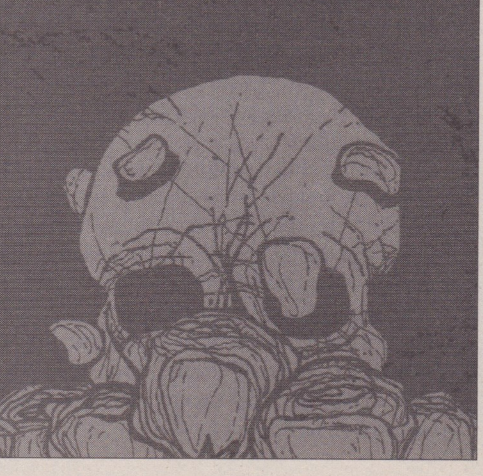

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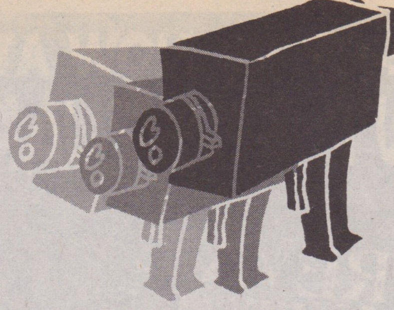

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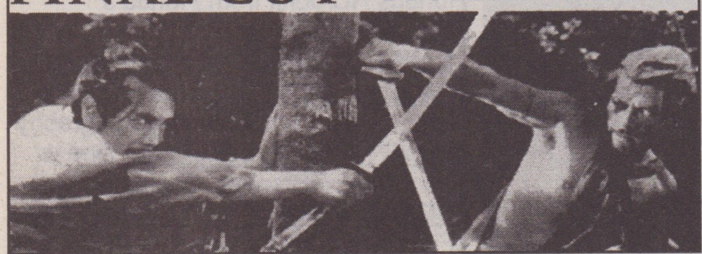

IS THAT ALL THERE IS?

In 2004, documentary filmmaker Eric Steel trained his cameras on the Golden Gate Bridge, night and day. Another filmmaker might have been more interested in well-known scenes like the evening sun as it falls behind the Gate; Steel took particular interest in the few men and women who lingered on the span a bit too long, and to their demise.

It's safe to say that Eric Steel's **The Bridge** offers the most complete (and unsettling) glimpses of one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World. And even though there have probably been more wondrous structures erected since its opening in 1937, none have had such a sobering shadow history.

After one suicide captured here, state troopers were asked how often this kind of thing happened. "More often than you think," was the reply." The official count is about twenty suicides a year, but no one really knows the actual number. We do know that this bridge is, aside from its obvious attraction as a tourist spot, America's #1 suicide location. Maybe the most valuable contribution of a film like **The Bridge** lies in its ability to strip away a certain amount of the mystery behind the jumps—usually the result of bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, depression…and some things you might not expect.

Eric Steel implies more than he says, but for some, a plunge from the Golden Gate Bridge is almost like chance to make a statement; here, a suicide has a chance to play out their life on something closer to a world stage. For others, the bridge is America's consensual locale for the suicide rite.

One younger man featured here, who dresses entirely in black, announced that he'd kill himself every morning before breakfast. Taking a Gene Simmons image, he was hopelessly unemployed and had a series of failed experiences with internet dating. In an example of classic bad timing, he had been accepted as a manager for his ideal job—on the very day of his jump.

Bad timing afflicts another man. In and out of difficulty due to bipolar disorder, he jumped—but decided he wanted to live just when he'd stepped off the span. Through quick thinking, he oriented his body so that his legs would absorb all the pressure. The bones simply shattered, and a few came close to puncturing his heart.

The scenic nature of the Golden Gate Bridge seems to invite some jumpers to spend extra time pondering their fate. As one interviewee admits, it's an act that requires incredible courage, however misplaced. But for some, the bridge's scenic nature is almost inviting, and may act as an anesthetic to their natural fears.

After its first local screenings some time ago, the director claimed the urgent need for a special railing to keep potentials jumper from doing something they'd later regret. It's a noble sentiment, but it reduces the film to a harrowing document on public safety—not unlike a gruesome driver's education film. You keep hoping for something more profound to emerge from the terrifying images, but as the film draws to its finish, it can only build drama by increasing the number of suicides. These scenes never cease to shock, but the film itself feels increasingly like a snuff film. It's then that you realize that the film is vacant in some important ways.

The documentary's most dramatic moment comes when a man notices a woman hop over the railing onto a set of girders, then dancing on the last few girders above the water. Tourists walk by the astonishing sight. Finally, someone reaches over the railing and, in one swift movement, pulls the woman to safety. The prospective suicide gapes in amazement, her moment of drama stolen. This one sequence conveys the film's social responsibility more than any of the jumps that succeed.

The Bridge promises much, but its concept is too narrow to sustain interest for its entire length. But you'll never think of the Golden Gate Bridge in quite the same way again.

Suicides like the ones documented in **The Bridge** seems sinfully self-indulgent after seeing Adrien Belle's extraordinary documentary, **Beyond the Call**. I was the only person in the audience during my showing, and haven't met anyone yet who've even heard the title.

The story is as remarkable as it is true. What happens when three middle-aged men, gray haired and unusually sharp, decide to start their own international philanthropic organization? Their by-laws, as such, are that they will only visit places that were "the worst of the worst"—places no one else would dare visiting. If other organizations were already helping out, they weren't interested. If religious charities offered their help (with the caveat that they might be able to evangelize), they *definitely* refused.

Their independence is fostered by a certain sense of financial security. Ed Artis is a cardiologist (also certified as an osteopath) who funnels nearly all of his extra personal money to his overseas trips; he's the one who started Knightsbridge, with colleagues Jim Laws and Walt Ratterman. Paradoxically, their name derives from their association with the Knights of Malta, a religious association that has existed for almost a millennium.

They visit a war-torn slice of Afghanistan, where warlords make entry particularly risky—especially rich Americans. Kidnapping is a risk they've been able to somehow dodge. As they negotiate funding for a Middle East trip, they routinely count out hundred-dollar bills from a thick wad almost matter-of-factly. In the background, you can hear the reverberations of American bombers.

The trio will attempt to caravan trucks filled with supplies across treacherous Indian roads. Their path is so inhospitable that their tires puncture like balloons, bringing their line of trucks to a crawl. Soon, tires have patches inside and out, and no way to turn back. Finally, at a remote school, they pay a for a teacher's yearly income in a lump sum, and deliver enough tents to shelter the village from the harsh winter. Knightsbridge had made a promise to save the village, and they did.

The three men perform the same feat, one country after another—Burma, India, Afghanistan, the Philippines—with a combination of business acumen and an unwillingness to take no for an answer, At one point, provincial government refuses entry; the men respond by demanding an

audience with the Prime Minister. At first, it might seem like another example of the "Ugly American" trying to assuage their guilt, but in becomes increasingly obvious that they're motivated by the idea of save "one life at a time, year after year."

The trio's success, they claim, is hardly a random event. Their bookshelves are filled with information on world cultures, and whenever they're home, at least one or two of them are hooked into internet news on the neediest areas. Part of their success stems from the their understanding and respect for the people they help.

These are fascinating men. One made his small fortune in mortgage banking and feels he has altogether too much free time. Another, a construction worker, built a small railroad that weaves through his property, and was only admitted into the group after he showed aptitude with solar power systems; his entire home is run "green."

A look at the wider world has transformed the trio's ideas about personal responsibility. One discovers he needs a root canal, but calculates the cost into human lives, and realizes that the same money could support a remote village for several months.

The trio has certainly done their moral arithmetic. Artis diagnoses one child with an abnormally enlarged head—water on the brain—and demands the child get immediate treatment. He's quick to peel off bills from his bankroll for treatment, and realizes with cool practicality that money equals one human life.

It's easy to say that "nobody cares," but this trio makes it hard to believe. It's equally hard to believe that this film doesn't have crowds pushing through the doors. This is the kind of film to which an *MRR* reader would be particularly attuned, and it would be a shame if you missed it.

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

WHERE IS MY MIND?

The thing about the Pixies is that I just don't get it. They have a couple of catchy songs, but some people seem to go on and on about how influential they are. Kurt Cobain liked them, but he also liked a lot of other bands. I ponder this whole dilemma as I watch **Loud Quiet Loud: A Film About The Pixies**. The film is not exactly about the Pixies the band. It is about their reunion tour. It simply follows the band on that tour.

Loud Quiet Loud: A Film About The Pixies follows the band from the first moments they get back together, through a bit of rehearsing and then around the world as they tour. The Pixies sell out their shows, but they don't seem to get the type of reception the Ramones get when they go to Brazil. I assume that is because indie hipsters are too cool to chase buses down the street. There is a lot of live footage of the band where they show themselves as lifeless performers. Yet the audiences don't mind, singing along and bobbing their heads.

Each band member returns to the Pixies from a new life and with new baggage. The strangest is the newly sober Kim Deal who needs her sister on tour for support and bans all alcohol from the backstage area. That isn't such an odd request for someone recovering from addiction. Except in Deal's case she is shown in every shot drinking a non-alcoholic beer. There is even a scene when the band goes to visit a recording studio in Iceland and she has a bottle in her hand.

Juxtapose that with a girl to whom Deal is an idol. She plays in a Pixies cover band, but when asked if she is the band's Kim Deal, she is very embarrassed. She thinks she could never be that good. Personally, it shocks me that this girl first heard of the Pixies because they were mentioned in a book she was reading. I would assume the Pixies still get played on the radio. The end credits show the cover band playing "Monkey Gone To Heaven," which then cuts to the Pixies doing the same song. The cover band sounds pretty good.

Watching the Pixies uncomfortably trying to get along with each other is painful. I can't imagine anyone but the most loyal fan really wanting to watch this. It is obvious the band members don't like each other. At first they try to stay in the same room, but then later on you see them on separate buses or in separate hotel rooms working on their own projects. When they begin to embark on the tour guitar player Joey Santiago toasts the band, "Don't Screw It Up." Prophetic or presumptive?

The important life lesson to learn from **Loud Quiet Loud: A Film About The Pixies** is that the band as a whole was what made the Pixies what they were/ are. They never say it, but you get the feeling they have finally realized it and that's why they are back together. It is kind of sad to see Black Francis talking with the producer for his new Frank Black album. All the encouragement the producer manages to muster about picking a record label is "I would say your best choice is New West of all you have right now. I think once they hear this record, they would say 'OK'." Just an OK was the best enthusiasm he could offer? That must hurt someone from such an influential band. Yet, it can serve as a cautionary tale for anyone in a band that is starting to get some success. (www.mvdvisual.com)

The Peops Show: Vol. 1 DVD collects people's stories. Artist Fly draws a person while she/he tells a story about his/her life. The story is then added as the background to the portrait, literally and figuratively. This works especially well on a page as seen every month in *MRR*. I find it interesting what story people choose to tell. Why is this story he or she wants to tell at this time? The interviewees are young and old, rich and poor, punk and non-punk. Some start with when they were born, relating the first memory they have. Some people have to promote themselves or something they are involved in. One woman told of her experience living in San Francisco during the '89 Loma Prieta Earthquake which comparatively seemed less egocentric and more interesting.

Translating "Peops" to a film needed a creative angle. When most people watch a film they don't want to stare a one picture while listening to a person talk about a random piece of personal history. I personally find that interesting, but I know I am an anomaly. In this case the filmmakers chose to add psychedelic digital effects, making the portraits move, multiply, change colors, and float by. Not exactly an ideal style for a film, but I can understand why they chose this. There is less focus on the image. The movement kind of lulls you into a daze and you focus more on the stories. If you would rather look at the drawings, the book would be a better option. (www.killerbanshee.com)

Two films I reviewed last year are now out on DVD. **Not A Photograph: The Mission Of Burma Story,** which like the Pixies film follows the band on their reunion tour and subsequent reformation. There are a few cool extras: The Moving Parts performing "Max Ernst" in 1978, two Mission of Burma song performances from 1979 and 1981, six songs from the 2002 reunion shows in Boston and New York, and in-studio footage of the band recording the "OnoffOn" record. (www.mvdvisual.com). **Voodoo Rhythm: The Gospel Of Primitive Rock'N'Roll**, a documentary of the record label featuring performances from The Monsters, King Khan, Reverend Beat-Man, and more, is available from Voodoo Rhythm (www.voodoorhythm.com)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, PO Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area, let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it.

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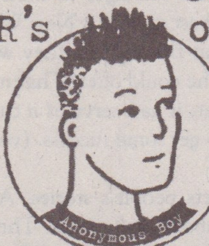

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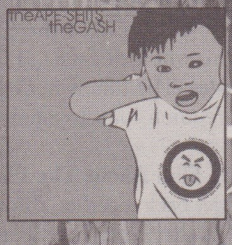

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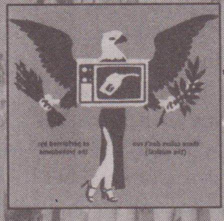

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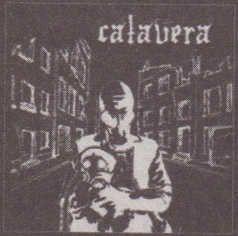

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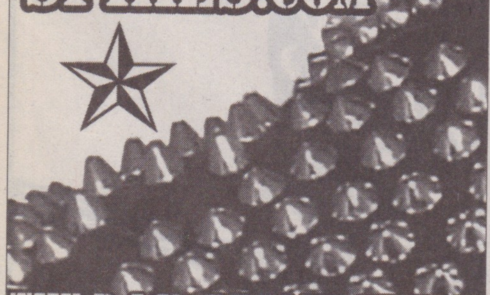

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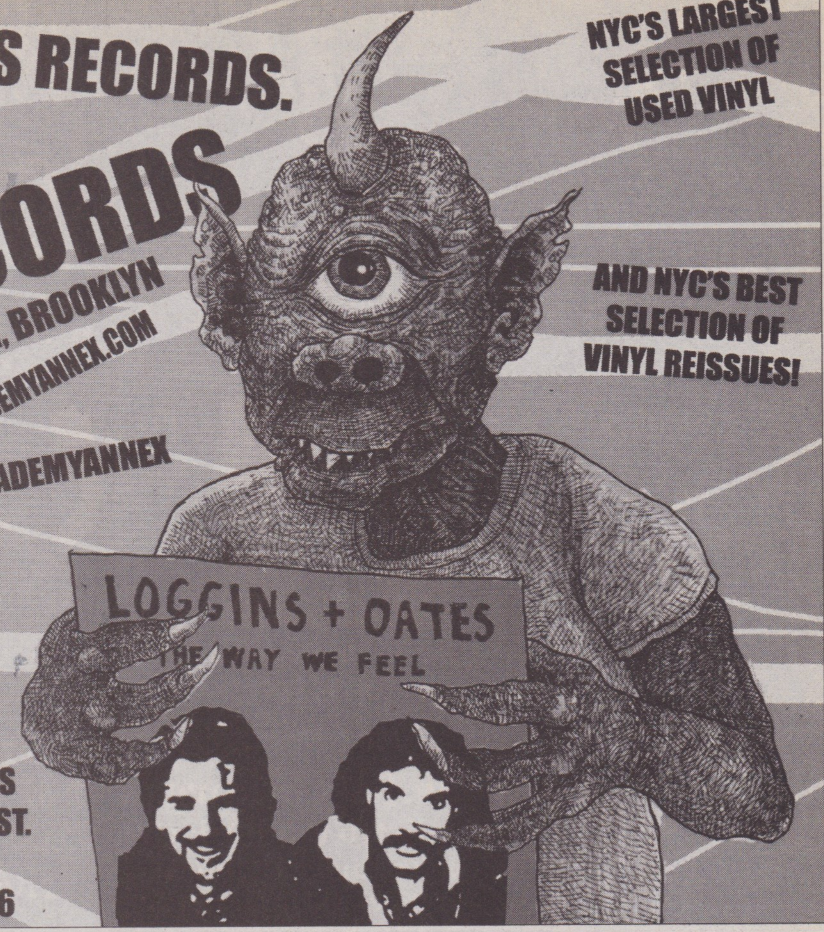

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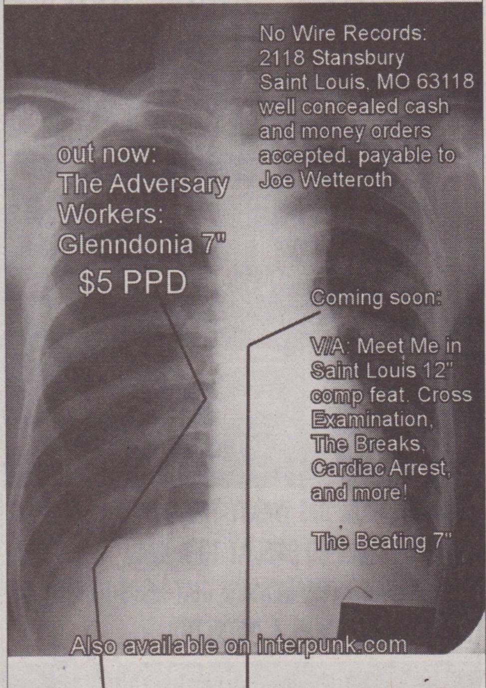

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50/50 – "Blood Soaked Security Guard" EP

FUCKKKKKKK YES! I've been waiting to hear this thing and I'm fucking floored. Brutal and heavy grind from Texas (go figure) with members from MACHINE-GUN ROMANTICS and KNUCKLESCRAPER ripping and slaying all and any who dare to question. This fucking thing destroys; they even do a REGURGIATE cover. At this point I think its safe to say that the Texas Grind Punx are truly putting out some of the best shit right now, so go buy this thing, OK! (NE)
(625, www.625thrash.com)

ALARM CLOCKS – "The Time Has Come" CD

From the looks of them, the ALARM CLOCKS have been around the block a few times—looking for a place to park their van, no doubt. They've learned a thing or two in their epic journey, I reckon. What it is, put simply, is to-the-point spooky '60s garage with an appropriately distant sound. Imagine a four-piece combo running through their set in the drum closet at the end of the hall, down a flight of stairs...long past closing time. *The Time Has Come* is all the more convincing for not being glossy, in the finest traditions of do-it-yerself rock 'n' roll...not surprising that it's a product of Norton Records, who (I'll go on record here) have yet to put out a platter (and CDs are platters) that didn't rate at least a single listen. "You're Always Near" haunts; "It's You" swaggers. Not a bad one to sign out on. (JH)
(Norton, PO Box 646, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276)

ANTI-JUSTICE / CHINESE TELEPHONES – split EP

If you ever go wrong with a Snuffy Smile record it must be your fault. Our Japanese brother to the far east (although west would make more sense from my side of the world) has only two flaws. Flaw the first, the records are too good and too hard to get! Flaw the second, he still hasn't made me a T-shirt. For the past several many moons Snuffy Smile has teamed up the best underappreciated bands from the US and the best underappreciated bands from Japan to make split 7"s that are actually worth owning and only appreciated by deadbeats like us. You'd think this motherfucker was paying me to say all this? Well, my skeptical friend, sometimes shit really is this awesome. The CHINESE TELEPHONES are from Old Milwaukee and play scuffed up (but not too gritty) pop punk with that dash of olde REPLACEMENTS that I do so appreciate these days, with that hint of '90s pop punk that I've been missing. ANTI-JUSTICE has a lot of the same elements but with some rock and roll get up and go. If you can find this, get it. If you're sorry…there's something wrong with you. (ST)
(Snuffy Smiles, 12-A Kamikousaicho, Shichiku, Kita Ku, Kyoto, 603-8117, JAPAN)

ARMITAGE SHANKS – "Smash the Cistern!" EP

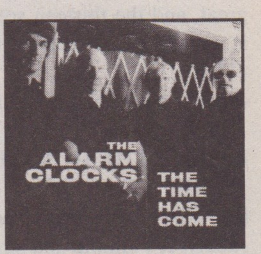
These loverly louts can do no wrong, as witness this wisdom from "Buzzcocks Mug": "I think punks deserve a crockery choice." "Me and Yer Granny on Bongos" is bent brilliance, "Chav Scum" is a wonderful glob of sleaze and-shit, and "Deny Me" is some kind of musical peak for the SHANKS to date. An absolute delight. (DD)
(Cock Energy, PO Box 8793, Chico, CA 95927)

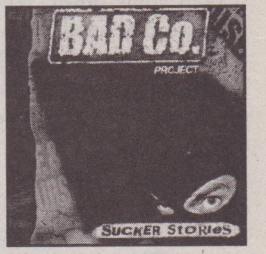
BAD CO – "Sucker Stories" CD

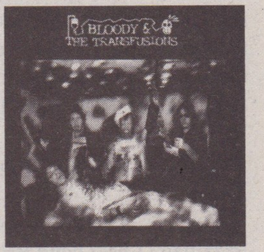
Rising from the ashes of OXYMORON and not sounding a hell of a lot unlike them. Great Oi-influenced street punk with a welcome dose of rock riffing. Closest comparison would be LA's PISTOL GRIP—hold on, is that a PISTOL GRIP cover I just heard?—and San Francisco's the REDUCERS. Paying homage to the past with a nod and a wink to the ANGELIC UPSTARTS and the COCKNEY REJECTS, to name a few. When this genre is done right it sounds timeless, providing a great antidote to the sea of mediocrity that exists in this scene. BAD CO has totally got this down. Recommended. (SD)
(Knock-Out, www.v8clothing.de)

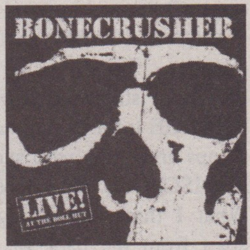
BALLAST – "Fuse" LP

Although it seems that many bands these days are not very exciting or original, sometimes you get something that inspires you or just strikes a note. The new BALLAST record could be thought of as just another crust record by many I am sure, but I for one really like the way the vocals intertwine and are not just shouted; they have a lot of melody. There are, however, loads of shouts for good measure. Their in-depth lyrics are really intuitive and very personally political. The music is melodic punk that sort of reminds me of what a current version of early UK peace punk would sound like. I really think that a lot of bands get labeled in a specific category; the people who like that category get the records while no one else ever even dares to









try to dig a little deeper. I really think that BALLAST would cross over a lot of boundaries and I hope people give them a listen. Hopefully they tour the States again because I only was able to catch one of their shows in LA and the power kept going out. Fuck. More than just another crust record. (WK)
(Trujaca Fala, www.trujacafala.com)

BAN THIS! – "Creepy Crawl" EP
I figured this to be some generic Euro edge stuff, but I was pretty far off the mark. I'm guessing that these kids started the band as a Y2K thrash band, but then progressed into the sound we have on this single. It has the fast snappy songs of straight-up early-'80s US hardcore, but filtered through some later BLACK FLAG or BL'AST! noodling. The production is great, and the thirteen songs just rip past. This is a really good record…terrible name though. (TB)
(Stress to Death, stresstodeath@hotmail.it)

BARSE / THE HEARTBURNS – split EP
THE HEARTBURNS deliver heavily RAMONES-influenced power punk'n'roll. It's catchy. It's simple and straightforward and it is smooth going down. What's not to like about what could be another RAMONES cover band? And with a song titled "Bomb the USA" and a band member that's willing to put her tits on the pic sleeve, you've got to love them. BARSE are equally as catchy, but in a real Australia 1978 sort of way. Seriously, if you told me that this was a long lost treasure from Melbourne circa 1978, I wouldn't have questioned you for a minute. (This, despite the fact that they're from England.) And it appears that they like to get the word "spunk" into every song at least once. Good shit. Real good shit. (KK)
(Hell's Tone, PL 162, 53101 LPR, FINLAND)

BESTHÖVEN – "Depois de um Ataque Aéreo" EP
This is a much-needed reissue of cult Brazilian D-beat band BESTHÖVEN's first EP, originally issued by mad Finn Otto Itkonen of FORCA MACABRA in 1999 in a very limited quantity. Since then, BESTHÖVEN has become a staple name for fans of raw DISCHARGE-influenced hardcore, appearing on comps and splits with such like-minded bands as DISCLOSE and CONTRAST ATTITUDE. What I think has always set BESTHÖVEN apart from the pack of DIS-clones is singer Fofao's anguished screams, which are really distinct and actually kind of moving. I mean, I like DISCHARGE and all but there are only so many bands the world needs where the singer imitates Cal's monotone bark and cuts and pastes DISCHARGE lyrics. Truth. This EP is extremely lo-fi, which is fine for this kind of punk generally but is so lo-fi on this recording as to take away from some of this band's raw power, which would really come into full flower on their second EP, *More Victims of War.* Anyway, pick this up since you probably missed it the first time around, and while you're at it, track down other stuff by this band. (GN)
(Room 101, c/o Mitchell Brochu, PO Box 37271, Philadelphia, PA 19148)

BIOFILO PANCLASTA – EP
Part crust, part emo, and part anarchist Argentineans. The tracks are slow, with lots of drama and buildup, and there are male/female tradeoff vocals, but most of it is not very heavy and overall it meanders. When I have the urge to write more about the packaging than the music, I know I probably won't throw this 7" on very often. (MH)
($4 ppd: Nuestra Lengua, 145 H. Street, Chula Vista, CA 91910)

BLACK SS / HOW WE ARE – split EP
This is a cool split that will appeal to both sides of the hardcore spectrum. HOW WE ARE, named after the LIFETIME tune I presume, is a cool band that cranks out two blasts of slightly metallic power that leave even a *non* metal-loving guy like myself seeking more. The singer must collapse often from screaming so loudly, and the music is a chaotic mess of crashing guitars and drums that come together to form a wall of melodic noise. BLACK SHEEP SQUANDRON delivers a pure hardcore assault—fast, distorted thrash with growling shouts of rage—that had me checking the date to see if this didn't come out of Boston in the early '80s! There's a definite NEGATIVE FX/early SLAPSHOT vibe and I ain't complaining 'cause they do it right! Imagine those bands with a bit more distortion and maybe a slight Japanese HC influence. I played this three times in a row and now I'm going to find their first EP! (BG)
(Stop Whining, Start Winning, 58 Belaire Dr, Horseheads, NY 14845, www.swx2records.com)

BLOODY & THE TRANSFUSIONS – CD
Sweet Jeezus, these guys look like they have one foot in the grave! The music and the attitude is sleazy junkie punk in the tradition of GG ALLIN, with a nod to JOHNNY THUNDERS. This is the latest effort from the same Bloody who fronted BLOODY MESS AND THE SKABS and who has obtained somewhat of a legendary status and a following. This is boozed-out rock and roll, but the attitude is punk as hell. The lyrics range from brilliant to pretty stupid, and some songs don't hold out as well as others, but this CD is recommended for fans of scum punk and roll. You know who you are. (BG)
(Black & Blue, PO Box 410325, Cambridge, MA 02141)

BONECRUSHER – "Live at the Doll Hut" CD
I have to confess, I know nothing about this band, though suspect that if they're putting out a live record, they have several previous studio efforts in the can and on the streets. And while (with no lyric sheet included) I worry about some of the lyrics, musically they really kick some butt (as you Americans say). They have that early melodic Oi sound down. Think early COCKNEY REJECTS, or perhaps early BUSINESS with the 4-SKINS' Gary Hodges providing the rough-yet-tuneful vocal bruising. The addition of a second guitarist with a nice line in flourishing guitar solos doesn't do any harm either. It's ironic, given lyrics (typical for the genre) along the lines of "We're all gonna fight tonight," that, of course, a fight breaks out in the audience, which the band doesn't like too much. But then, again, mebbe that's not ironic, but only to be expected. Either way, the CD rocks, and the quality is pretty good for live too. (RK)
(Class War, www.classwarmusic.com)

BONECRUSHER / OXYMORON – split 2xCD
I've been a big fan of both these bands for years now, so was pretty stoked to get this for review. Each band gets a disc each, so it really is two separate LPs in one package. The BONECRUSHER stuff is brand new, and though maybe not quite as good as their first few singles, is still great. Gruff Oi-tinged punk rock with a boatload of melodies and hooks, like a tougher WORKIN STIFFS. I don't have much time for what passes for "street punk" these days, but these old timers can still deliver the goods better than most. OXYMORON has always been good, all the way back to their first single. I'm guessing they are on this release to help sell BONECRUSHER to the Germans, as their tracks are five years old. No complaints here though as they are as good as ever at their UK82 ONE WAY SYSTEM sound. Recommended. (TB)
(Knockout, www.knock-out.de)

BONK – "Bonk Against Nothing" CD
Metal-ish rock 'n' roll from Norway. Somewhere in between TURBONEGRO and THE HIVES with some SONIC YOUTH qualities. The keys here are wailing guitars and bashing drums. On top of all that, this manages to maintain a weird feel. Wild. (RL)
(Ace Fu, www.acefu.com)

BOTTLED VIOLENCE – "Fable" EP
First off, if you name your band after a MINOR THREAT song, you are already setting the standard pretty high. They don't come close to measuring up to the band they are named after, but then again who does? Instead, BOTTLE VIOLENCE blends together a number of genres and they do it pretty well. They take ele-

ments of dirty crust, blast-beat grind, and new school metallic hardcore, and make it work. The styles flow pretty seamlessly together and the vocalist sticks with a simple gruff delivery through the entire EP. Shit, they even had one crazy fast break that reminded me of HERESY. To be honest, this was a lot better than I thought it would be and I would certainly recommend checking it out. (RC)
(Suburban Waste, 6865 SW Mayo St, Portland, OR 97223)

THE BOYS – CD
If you know yer punk rock history you'll know that these guys got in on the first floor in London 1976. Featuring the two members of the LONDON SS who didn't go on to form THE CLASH or GENERATION X (or SIGUE SIGUE SPUTNIK for that matter) one of whom (Casino Steel) was also in the HOLLYWOOD BRATS, THE BOYS played charged up pub rock (also commonly known as "punk rock") with a bit of a rock 'n' roll and a glam feel. Lacking the street cred and political moxy of THE CLASH, the shock of the SEX PISTOLS, the cool of THE JAM, or the speed of THE DAMNED, THE BOYS were kinda relegated to playing on the B-team. Nevertheless, they very much were there when it was all going down and it has to be said that "First Time" is one of the best punk songs ever written. Now their debut (best) LP (along with assorted singles) has been released on CD for you lucky ducks. (AD)
(Captain Oi, PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 8QA, UNITED KINGDOM)

CARDIAC ARREST – "Get Away from the Neverending…." EP
CARDIAC ARREST (in a Euro repress of their first EP) clocks in with five tunes that don't lose a beat in terms of hardcore intensity. The tunes do indeed recall JERRY'S KIDS, albeit with an Ian MacKaye-like tautness in the vocals. Although uniformly strong, "Neverending Cycle" is clearly the standout, with a delivery that nearly blows the needle off the record and sets a standard for the band. Recommended. (SS)
(Kangaroo, Middenweg 13, 1099 AA, Amsterdam, HOLLAND)

CHARM / UG MAN – split LP
I am surprised to see this coming through now, as I know the release of it coincided with their US tour a few months ago. Regardless, let's get to the tunes. CHARM takes a song structure similar to GAUZE and then blows the fuck out of it with some intense distortion and shredding guitar work. The last track on their side disintegrates into a senseless barrage of noise, which could have been left off. But the rest of their stuff is fucking awesome. UG MAN (who is ex-GOD'S GUTS) follows up with a frantic mess of noisy punk. One song may be a fist pumping mess of quirky rock 'n' punk. The next may be an intense barrage of speed and aggression. But the one thing that remains consistent is that everything sounds extremely blown-out. Almost too blown-out if you ask me. The UG MAN side was OK, but the CHARM side blew me away. (RC)
(Wajlemac, PO Box 8039, Emeryville, CA 94662, www.wajlemac.com)

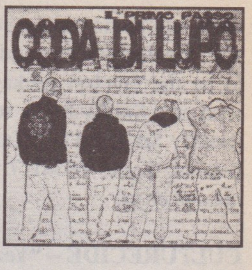
CHINESE TELEPHONES / THE POTENTIAL JOHNS – split LP
Milwaukee's CHINESE TELEPHONES start with a super catchy tune that, coincidentally, is a dead ringer for a FACE TO FACE song (you guys are *so* busted) and continue on with a whole side of powerful, tuneful punk with hook-laden choruses. This is no wimpy '90s pop-core, though. These dudes know how to stay drunk and punk as fuck. The POTENTIAL JOHNS is the solo project of the MARKED MEN's Jeff Burke, so it sounds like, well, you know, the MARKED MEN…but a little less rock 'n' roll, and a little more CLOROX GIRLS-eqse. It's all very vocal-driven—maybe a little too much, to where you feel like you getting pummeled by catchy vocals—but why complain about that? At last this long-awaited record gets its official release. (PC)
(Cheeky Git, no address)

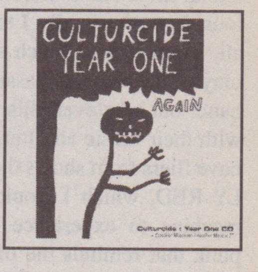
CODA DI LUPO – "Il Primo Passo" CD
CODA DI LUPO plays solid, melodic punk rock that doesn't succumb to many of the pitfalls of modern pop-punk, such as overwrought vocals, cheesy lyrics, and that obvious, in-you-face production quality. CODA DI LUPO sounds like a real punk band, rooted in the mid-'80s tradition, but with cleaner than usual vocals, catchier than usual melodies, and more complex than usual song structures. And their dark lyrics belie the more upbeat feeling of their tunes. All in all, well done! (PC)
(Urla Nel Silenzio, Emanuele Cacchioni, Frazione Ciseran 158, 11020 Montjovet [AO] ITALY, myspace.com/codadilupo)

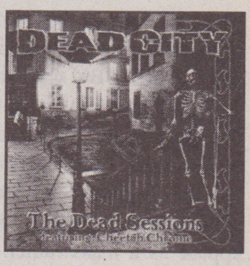
COMADRE — "The Youth" LP
If you like anthemic-style hardcore punk in the style of LIFETIME, but also like Gainesville emo in the school of PALATKA, then this record was made for your collection. The backing vocals evoke the sound of the audience singing along with AGAINST ME! To be honest with you, all of the above references put this record on the "*hell no*" list for me personally, but I bet there are a bunch of readers of *MRR* who are totally down and ready to listen to this as they hitchhike to Asheville or whatever. (LG)
(Dood, www.doodrecords.com)

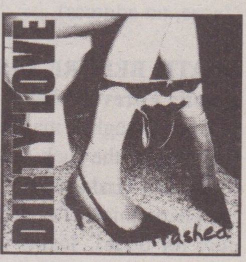
COREYFUKINFELDMAN! – "Dyno-Skate-Thrash" EP
So-bad-it's-good, sludge-y, sand-blasted, lower-than-lo-fi punk, not to be confused with the other scratchy, transistor governmental messages being transmitted out from your fillings. Annoying but necessary. (BS)
(Trigger-on-the-Dutendoo, trigger.on.the.dutendoo@gmail.com)

THE CRUMP – "Leave Home" EP
The dreary winter months become a lot nicer when a package from Snuffy Smile arrives at the *MRR* compound. Yes people, the punkest label on the planet once again delivers us with a great new band in THE CRUMP. THE CRUMP pumps out two great ditties on the A-side that would be a sure thing to please any fan of early Lookout releases. The B-side has a lot more of a power pop feel with a song that would be have collectors searching for it like mad if it had come out in '79. Combine the two sides and what we have here kids is a classic winner and sure









thing automatic top ten record. On a side note, with the denim cover and glossy insert, this has to be the fanciest packaging that I have ever seen on a Snuffy Smile release. (JF)
(Snuffy Smiles, 12-A Kamikousaicho Shichiku Kita-ku, Kyoto 6038117, JAPAN, the_crump@hotmail.co.jp)

CULTURECIDE – "Year One" CD

I really can't decide if I love or hate this. It's a total mess but is more endearing than obnoxious. I mean actually I totally do not hate it at all. I don't know much about this band really, maybe they are a classic internet know-it-all band, but whatever, this is my first experience with their music and I am sold. The liner notes have fliers from shows they played with REALLY RED, which I would love to have a time machine to experience. Holy shit. Texas art punk that reminds me of THE SCREAMERS, THE PRIMITIVE CALCULATORS, PERE UBU…It's like a early '80s MEN'S RECOVERY PROJECT but from fucking TEXAS! They have that fucked up pop sensibility of the early PERE UBU 45s, but then they have a no wave jam out track with bird song and collapsing Korg beats. This is really cool, but sometimes I think these CD discographies somehow take away from the impact and atmosphere of a band—the artwork is diminished, the songs appear as a mass rather than a distinctive set. It's totally worth listening to the whole thing and not dismissing it cause of one song that hits you the wrong way. Funny, politically incisive, scary and mean and punk as fuck dudes. (LG)
(Hot Box Review, hotboxreview@hotmail.com)

DEAD CITY – "The Dead Sessions" CD

Guys from LOST GENERATION and CHEETAH CHROME recorded this back in the early '90s. Sounds like a bunch of middle-aged has-beens who haven't got a clue on the current music scene or just couldn't understand anything past 1979. Sad, generic rock 'n' roll. (SD)
(Incas, no address)

DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR – "Friends Family Forever" LP

Even though it may be quite a bit jock-ular, I'm diggin' the fuck out of this record. Maybe cause I'm kinda drunk! This is the shit I grew up on dunnie!! Tough-as-nails metallic hardcore for dudes. If this was the late '90s and I was still living in Boston, which is from where DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR hails, this band would be playing alongside BLOOD FOR BLOOD, MERAUDER, DEATH THREAT, HATEBREED, DARKSIDE NYC, DIECAST, and the like at Axis or the Avalon every week. And as big as I am I'd still be shitting my pants, scared that some dude was gonna beat the hell out of me. You may not understand, but I mean that in a good way. This band knows what they want to play and they do it well. Probably not for most people who read this rag, but if you dig shit like TERROR, this is for your basketball jersey wearin' ass. Windmill your Nikes off and punch your grandma's fuckin' teeth out!!! (JU)
(Bridge Nine, www.bridge9.com)

THE DESPISED – "Punk, It's Not for Rich Kids Anymore" CD

This Atlanta, Georgia band has a very muddled, metallic sound with a gruff vocalist who immediately brings to mind Paul Bearer of SHEER TERROR. Sure enough, their sixth track on the CD is a cover of "Just Can't Hate Enough." Besides wandering into the occasional double-bass part, this isn't half bad. (CC)
(www.despisedatlanta.com)

DICK CHENEY – "Pa Mitt Rum" EP

Throwing this EP on the turntable sent me on a mad dash through the *MRR* record library trying to figure out exactly who the band reminded me of. It's on the tip of my tongue… Is it REGULATIONS? Almost, but they're too mid-tempo. FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES? Close, but not them either, they're a bit too lo-fi. AMDI PETERSEN'S ARME? Wrong again, that band just sounds old, and DICK CHENEY definitely has a more modern feel. OK, I give up—I can't put my finger on it, so I'm just gonna have to call this early-'80s-US-influenced hardcore from Sweden. Oh yeah, and despite the name, it's good! (CS)
(Thrashbastard, c/o Andreas Knobloch, Warschauer str 57, 10243 Berlin, GERMANY, thrashxbastard@yahoo.de)

DIRECT FROM HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY – "It Ain't Cheating with Me" EP

With a line-up of seven, you're bound to have an organ. And when you mix punk rock/new wave and an organ, you've either got THE REZILLOS or you've got a sound that is deep, deep, deep into the swamp. With this one, you've actually got a bit of both, particularly when you consider that they've got the male/female vocal thing going on. I like it, Dick. It's got a real beat and the kids seem to be having a real good time dancing to it. (KK)
(Go Ape, no address)

DIRTY LOVE – "Trashed" CD

Debut full-length from this London quintet. They boast ex-members of the UK SUBS (which means nothing, as I suspect virtually everyone in the UK with an instrument has played in the UK SUBS by now), MENACE (me likes), and CASE. Don't 'spose anyone remembers CASE, as they only ever released one EP, but they were really amazing. Anyways, this band is rather good too! Female-fronted, with lots of up-front sexual politics in the lyrics, they really nail that '77 melodic glam-punk sound. Think HEARTBREAKERS on amphetamines, playing AVENGERS covers. Some excellent lead guitaring, and a collection of catchy tunes really propel this. Top notch, for sure. Track it down. (RK)
(Dirty Love, www.dirtylove.me.uk)

DISKELMA – "Run For Your Life" EP

Finnish Jap-core worship, complete with DEATHSIDE-esque barking vocals and some pretty ropey wailing guitar leads. This is decent enough but gets lost in the pack amidst the more authentic sounds of fellow Finns SELFISH or the heavier BURIAL from Germany. If you are a rabid fan of the genre, go ahead and track it down. If not, save yer pennies. (TB)
(www.punkinfinland.net/kamanen)

DISKONTO – "Diskontography" CD

A whopping *sixty-six* tracks collected from this now-venerable Swedish band's earliest EPs, splits, and compilation appearances dating back to 1992. While the extensive liner notes and history detail the amount of severe teenage inebriation involved with each recording, this somehow pulls no punches in raw distortion, pounding, primitive D-beat, scalding vocals, and classic '80s-style Swedish hardcore attack. Building off the ANTI-CIMEX blueprint—particularly reminiscent for the first forty or so tracks, with good clean recordings, of CIMEX's less meaty, a bit clearer, but no less searing *Really Fast Vol. 1* cuts—DISKONTO plays an unrelenting dose of raging hardcore that progressively gets more blown-out and noisy as the CD progresses. It sticks to the formula, but it works and serves as excellent collection for fans as a reminder and for those new to the band as a testament of DISKONTO's raw fury. (KS)
(Crimes Against Humanity, PO Box 1421, Eau Claire, WI 54702)

DISTRESS – "Fuck the System" CD

Russian (?!) CIMEX worship, complete with a cover of "Set Me Free" by the aforementioned. An eight-song CD in slipcase—I was ready to pan this as hopelessly generic based on the boring, almost non-existent packaging and obvious tribute-band feel of the release, but actually this is pretty fucking raging! The vocals are raw as hell and the songs are short and to the point. I hope fans of BESTHÖVEN take note, 'cause this is one of the best Scandi-thrash bands I've heard in a while—seriously. (I should mention that this is a different band than the Dutch band of the same name that also steals the DISCHARGE font. Maybe that will convince bands to stop carbon-copying their logos and images. Probably not, but here's hoping.) (GN)
(Total Punk, c/o Alexander Jakovlev, PO Box 44, Saint Petersburg 192 171, RUSSIA, alex.distress@gmail.com)

DISTRESS / KOMATOS – split CD

KOMATOS starts out this CD with angry

street punk that could be likened to a band like THE CASUALTIES with the guitarist of the ACCÜSED—I shit you not, this guy pulls off some lightening fast palm muted guitar riffing. They also have better lyrics than THE CASUALTIES. DISTRESS gives away their sound with the name but this also has a charging street punk element like the EXPLOITED and the VARUKERS. Both bands are from Russia and have really top-notch recordings and good lyrics that are translated to English. I totally recommend tracking this down if you have an itch for some studs, spikes, and charged-hair punk that has potency and relevance. (WK)
(Total Punk, alex.distress@gmail.com)

EARACHES – "Time on Fire" CD
"This album is dedicated to those who choose action over complacency," write the EARACHES. I'm okay with that. I must admit that I expected the worst (shame on me), but they're actually a fun punk rock band with a kinda strident WHO/CREATION vibe...all raised fists, jangling guitars, and lyrics about "The time is right now!" Kinda '60s, kinda garage, kinda HEADCOATS minus the Medway accents. Melodic, unique, and dare I say it, emotionally affecting. Proof that quality can smack you upside the noggin when you least expect it...EARACHES, I'm a fan. Use that power with responsibility! (JH)
(Steel Cage, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125)

EFFIGY / HELLSHOCK – "Out from the Dark Side" split CD
I originally reviewed the vinyl version of this record so I won't bore you again with my rants and lame descriptions. All I have to say is if you are interested in heavy crust punk this is fucking essential and probably one of the best splits to have come out in the last decade. The CD version has different art from the vinyl done by Sugi, who has drawn some of the best covers in recent memory. I have to be amazed by the sheer detail. (WK)
(Crimes Against Humanity, www.cahrecords.com)

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN / WHITE BARONS – split EP
This is an interesting combination: The first release from ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN for December 2006 and a real debut from WHITE BARONS. The ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN track was recorded live in my hometown of Alameda (not Alemeda!), California. It's a good recording of a good song, but it didn't leave much of an impression on me. Still, if you're a big fan, you'll enjoy it. The WHITE BARONS track is a straightforward rocker and you get the impression that the band is having a good time playing it. It wouldn't surprise me to hear coming from a '64 Falcon. This track alone will probably squeak this one into my Top 10. (KK)
(Champagne and Cocaine, no address)

ENCROACHED – "Shoot the Icons" EP
On their debut EP you get seven songs of raw blown out thrashy punk from Japan. The hoarsely screamed vocals sound passionately urgent and the recording is massively distorted, but nothing here really sets this release apart. In the end I thought it was a rather boring. (RC)
(Shock To The System, PO Box 300991, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, www.shocktothesystemrecords.com)

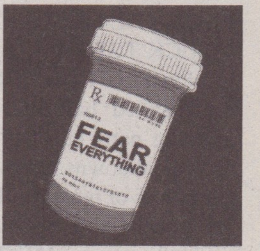
EVIL CONDUCT – "Sorry...No" CD
A reissue of this Dutch band's debut from 2002. Also included on this are demos from 1986. So that's pretty scarce output for twenty-something years. This is good street punk stuff along the ways of COCKSPARRER and THE BUSINESS. Done on a four-track, this CD has a stripped-down quality. Good for fans of the Euro punk. (RL)
(Knock Out, www.knock-out.de)

FIFTH HOUR HERO / NAVEL – split EP
Yay! Japan's Snuffy Smile label is officially back, now with an added "s" at the end and a new address in Kyoto. You know the Snuffy drill: one side is a Japanese band that sounds not unlike SNUFF but with a unique character all its own, the other side a top-notch melodic punk band from somewhere outside of Japan. This time the Japanese band is NAVEL and the unique character is in the crazy, nearly out of control drumbeats that offset alternately jangly and driving guitars. The strong melodic vocals hold it all together really well, giving NAVEL a sound that grows on you, and is wonderful. The "foreign" band this time is Montreal, Canada's FIFTH HOUR HERO, with their signature pop/emo style that really defies both of those categories. The music is not typical, though it is firmly rooted in that tradition—intricate guitars, intense vocals, obtuse lyrics. Their unique song structures, beautiful melodies, and male-female vocals separate them from the herd, and to top it off, they're really fucking good. A better than usual release from this already great label. *Kampai!* (PC)
(Snuffy Smiles, 12-A Kamikousaicho, Shichiku Kita-ku, Kyoto 603-8117, JAPAN)

FLAMINGO 50 – "Tear It Up" CD
Fresh off a 7" split with J-CHURCH, Liverpool's FLAMINGO 50 plays melodic punk that has a mid-'80s college rock feel. The music is really tight, straightforward stuff with soaring female vocals. Overall, this is better than a lot of stuff out there and not a bad pick up. It may be tough going finding this though as the label has already gone under. In the meantime you can get it from the band. (JF)
(Flamingo 50, Flat 3, S. Rutland Ave, Liverpool, L17 2AF, UNITED KINGDOM)

FLAMINGO 50 / J CHURCH – split EP
FLAMINGO 50 is decent English pop punk with great vocals and a distinct WEDDING PRESENT influence—perhaps it's in the romantic introspection as much as in the frenetic guitar. J CHURCH should be well known to readers of *MRR* by now—one song is a great upbeat scorcher, the other (like most J CHURCH covers) is a throwaway version of a CARS song. It's definitely worth picking up, and I'll be on the lookout for more F50 too. (AM)
(Los Diaper, c/o Shawn Quinn, 630 Cameo St, Lansing, MI 48911, shawnkquinn@gmail.com)

THE FLAMING TSUNAMIS – "Fear Everything" CD
Heavy, down-tuned metallized hardcore, with throaty vocals, gang choruses, and horns? Ska parts?? I really liked the ska parts, the band is super talented, the playing is at times exceptional, but this shit is hard to listen to. File



under: Looped skank part into "crazy" metal hardcore part. (BS)
(Kill Normal, myspace.com/theflamingtsunamis)

FOR THE WORSE – "Blood, Guts, Going Nuts" CD

These Boston hardcore kids pull no punches in their brand of hooligan hardcore, attacking everything from Morrissey fans to 16-year old anarcho punks. Containing the same vocalist from A POOR EXCUSE, FOR THE WORSE busts out 23 tracks of fast and aggressive hardcore with a FREEZE cover to boot. (CC)
(Bridge 9, www.bridge9.com)

FUCK ON THE BEACH / RELATIONSHIT! – Split CD

It's been many years since I've listened to FUCK ON THE BEACH and they still sound the same—crazy fastcore with harsh, yelled vocals and a crazy blown-out/distorted recording. FOTB shreds through five new songs plus VIVISICK and SHIKABANE covers. RELATIONSHIT!, who also hails from Japan is not too good. It's almost like listening to "thrash by the numbers"—is this band a joke? Are they for real? Who knows, oh well, *whateverzzzzzzzz*. Along with the killer tunes this disc has a DVD of FOTB and RELATIONSHIT! Yer fuckin' stoked huh? (NE)
(MCR, 157 Kamiagu, Maizuru, Kyoto 624-0913, JAPAN)

FUCK THE FACTS / MESRINE – split EP

FUCK THE FACTS has one long-ass song of blown-out CONVERGE or AS THE SUN SETS-styled hardcore; there are some fast grinding parts but they all seem to lead into bad breakdowns over-saturated with pinch harmonics or melodic blackened mellow parts. The vocals sound so much like J. Bannon that its kinda creepy. MESRINE plays rad death grind with good brutal lows and not-so-annoying highs. The only shitty thing about this side of the split is the recording; I don't know if this thing was compressed to hell but it sure sounds like it, the vocals and the snare are so much louder than the guitar and bass. Oh well. (NE)
(Sonic Deadline, 73 1/2 Hotel De Ville Gatineau-Sector Hull, Quebec, J8X 2E4 CANADA)

THEE GARAGEKID – "Gets a Rekkid" EP

This kid wears his influences on his sleeves: MUMMIES, BILLY CHILDISH, etc. But this one-man (kid?) band (overdubbed, from the sound of it) does such a spirited execution that rises above the hordes of also-rans and wannabes. Call it what you want to, I call it messing with the kid. And more power to him. (DD)
(Squoodge, www.squoodge.de)

GBH – "From Here to Reality" CD

I gotta admit, I've never really been a GBH fan, maybe it's because none of my friends listened to them in my formative years, but here at the end of 2006 I don't really think it's time to get into GBH. The plus side is I have a clean, uncorrupted slate to review upon…What we have here is the CD reissue of their sixth album from 1990. This one, to me, has more in common with the CRO-MAGS' *Best Wishes*, than anything UK82. That could be a good thing but it's not. You already know whether or not you want this. (JU)
(Captain Oi!, www.captainoi.com)

GBH – "A Fridge Too Far" CD

The first few GBH records are classics; I love 'em. Every fucker either had them or the EXPLOITED on their jackets (I had GBH). If you are new to them, then track down their *Leather, Bristles, Studs and Acne* 12" and avoid this steaming turd. This was from when every band from the early '80s who had disappeared up their own arseholes were trying out metal, much to the horror of kids like me who lived and died for punk rock. I hated this then, and still hate it now. Shite. (TB)
(Captain Oi!, www.captainoi.com)

THE GIANT ROBOTS – "Too Young to Know Better, Too Hard to Care" CD

Unfortunately, this band handicapped themselves early by choosing a name that will always be associated with a magazine. THE GIANT ROBOTS are a Swiss band that does the '60s pop thing. Peppy songs sung with French accents (sometimes even in French), emphasized by rollicking organs and surfy guitars. They are not "hard," nor do I believe they are "young" either. At least they have a good sense of humor and managed to make a fun record. (CK)
(Voodoo Rhythm, info@voodoorhythm.com)

GIUDA – CD

Speedy Italian hardcore that sounds more like it's from Scandinavia. Crusty and sometimes catchy, but still relentless. GUIDA somehow mixes a bit of Japanese hardcore chaos in with the crusty sounds. They keep it short and quick; at ten tracks in sixteen minutes, this is no frills and straightforward. Three of the members used to be in DISPREZZO and the other members were also in GROEBELAR and DISARM. (MH)
(MCR, 157 Kamiagu Maizuru, Kyoto 624-0913, JAPAN, www.dance.ne.jp/~mcr)

HAUNTED GEORGE – "Bone Hauler" CD

Listening to this fifteen-track album conjures up images of barren ghost towns, loneliness, and haunted highways of the American West. This is a collection from the vaults of Steve Pallow, who you may know from bands like the BEGUILED and the NECESSARY EVILS. Like the aforementioned groups, this stuff is lo-fi garage simplicity, and I mean that it a good way. The mood of the music is captured well, as it was recorded in a small, forgotten town in the Mojave Desert. Think of the CRAMPS with more of a country/western influence, mixed with the GORIES and a touch of psychedelic madness. Cool shit. (BG)
(Dead Beat, PO Box 361392, Cleveland, OH 44136)

HEAD – "No Hugging No Learning" LP

HEAD was part of a slew of mid-'90s RAMONES/QUEERS-inspired punk bands, and now they're back with a whole new album of…um…the same old stuff. If you're into the GROOVIE GHOULIES and all those simple yet fun, boppy, rockin' pop-core bands, and don't mind some slightly creepy, sexist lyrics ("Girl Girl Action," "I'm 35 Years Older Than You"), then chances are you'll dig this album. If you can track down their split 7" with METAL MIKE, you'll get their best song ever, "Magic Eight Ball," which is a mix-tape staple for yours truly. A reluctant "welcome back" to these old folx. (PC)
(Evil Clown, PO Box 9144, Seattle, WA 98109, evilclownrecords@yahoo.com)

HELL ON EARTH – "Early Years: Hell Never Lets Go! Pt 1" EP

Fairly straight ahead thrash/speed metal with some early black metal sounds. This is a raw, lo-fi, four-track demo recorded back in '97/'98 that is just now seeing the light of day. I dig the vocals; they are super scratchy and almost understandable. You know, there is nothing wrong with this EP, but unless you need every speed metal record ever released, I doubt you'll have much interest in it. What's fun is that there are 15 tracks(?!) on this EP. I'm not even sure I could find them all when listening. Some of these guys are now in the thrash band RAZOR FIST. (MH)
(Trigger-on-the-Dutendoo, trigger.on.the.dutendoo@gmail.com)

HELLSONICS – "Demon Queen" CD

Apparently, I am party to a whole new genre here: "metal-billy." Yep, that's psychobill, mixed with metal. Yep, it's as crap as it sounds. I don't have much time for psychobilly, and I certainly don't have time when it's mixed with hard rock. The female vocals are a change from the usual Danzig/Vanian fare, but once I hit the cover of "These Boots," I had to reach for the off button. Sorry guys. (TB)
(Drunkabilly, www.drunkabilly.com)

HIBACHI STRANGLERS – "Our City Doesn't Stink All the Time" EP

The fact that this fantastic debut erupted from Mo-fucking-bile, Alabama has gotta send

shivers down the spines "punk mecca" inhabitants of every stripe. THE HIBACHI STRANGLERS have that outta-nowhere greatness that makes you wonder just how they did it: the snot of ANGRY SAMOANS (the vox cause a double-take) coupled with a choppy guitar attack, precision trash production, and an intelligent handle on making gold outta yer own feces. "Parking Lot" depicts a world of shit…yet remains one of the best tunes I've heard all year. Who knew? Get this or kick yourself come year-end top ten time. (MC)
(Floridas Dying, www.floridasdying.com)

H.I.V. – "Fetishcore" CD
I know what you're thinking, but the initials apparently stand for HARDCORE IMMORTAL VIOLENCE. Let's hope something was lost in the translation. Musically, they attempt to hit as many modern punk touchstones as possible, from melodic hardcore to metallic thrash to the odd ska breakdown. While they're all over the map musically, the vocals in particular are consistently strong, and the guitars (all three of them!) sound pretty good. The letdown here is the packaging: the cover is a collage of "fetish" imagery that looks like it was downloaded from the internet five minutes before the artwork was due at the printers, and the insert features a graphic but uninteresting photograph of a woman performing oral sex on a man. The lyrics and some writing hint at a nihilist philosophy, but the overall effect is one of boredom. For good nihilistic Italian punk, see OUT WITH A BANG. (AM)
(Endless Brutality Of Men, www.ebmrecords.com)

JERK ALERT – "Candy Ass" EP
Six tracks of raw, degenerate punk snot, with male and female vocalists vying for the title of Most Annoying 2007. It goes past in a blur but gels together pretty well. They claim to be "sex-fuelled, sex-addicted, and sex-driven," but if that's the case we're definitely not talking slow, languorous lovemaking—it's a hectic, shivering two-minute knee trembler in the alley behind the gig and then an awkward walk to the chippy. (AM)
(Eradicator, PO Box 191, Bloomington, IN 47404)

JETSET RADIO – "From Ashes to Life" LP
So, based on the cover I was preparing myself for some sort of brutal German crust before putting this on…and then rocking pop punk a little like RANDY comes on. Mind blown briefly. They describe themselves as similar to ALKALINE TRIO, THE ATARIS, and JIMMY EAT WORLD, but it's not too shabby at all. If anything I've said sounds like anything you own—other than the brutal German crust—I'd try to find these cats on the internet and listen to a few things for yourself. (ST)
(Wanda, www.wandarecords.de)

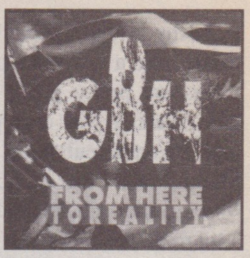
THE KA-NIVES – "Get Duped!" LP
.....fucking shit, what a mess of a record.....I LOVE IT!!!! Now this is what I call an authentic garage platter!!!!!!! You can't get any lower than this scum.......this Houston Tex-ass trio does it filthy, "do-it-yourself" style with rub on letters, type writers, fotocopied fanzine-like insert, and pasted LP jackets.....limited to 300 and recorded in a toilet with what sounds like sticks and stones as instruments!!!!!!!!! This shit is way rawer than the MUMMIES and easily fucks the living shit out of SUPERCHARGER leaving their assholes open wide for inspection!!!!!!! The legendary Larry Winther would be jealous if he heard this animal of a lead guitarist bash out his licks......he plays like a man who knows how to eat pussy for reals!!!!! Even though this puppy is a covers LP, I'd still like to give it two big hairy dicks up...Radio X eat your heart out, baby!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (SW)
(Lance Rock, 370 Bruce Ave, Nanaime BC, CANADA, VOR 3Y1)

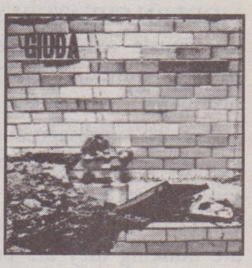
KRUPSKAYA – "Clouds Over Pripyat" CD
I've always had a soft spot for noisy, heavy, and chaotic bands. Bands that blaze (18 tracks in 18 minutes) through short tracks, painting a bleak picture of the world. KRUPSKAYA does these things and when I was finished listening the first time I felt like I had been run over by a truck, broken. This disc is themed around the Chernobyl disaster. I recognized the photographs on the front and back of the CD immediately—they were shots from Chernobyl—and I later learned that Pripyat was the town where all the workers lived that was abandoned because of the disaster. Noisy, chaotic metalcore with moments of grindcore reminding me of MORSER and a bit of WATCHMAKER. They took their name from the Marxist participant in the October Revolution and Lenin's wife, Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya. I'm off to find more music by this band. (MH)
(Ripping Thrash, FCR PO Box 152, Burton-On-Trent, Staffs DE 14 1XX, UNITED KINGDOM, www.rippingthrash.com)

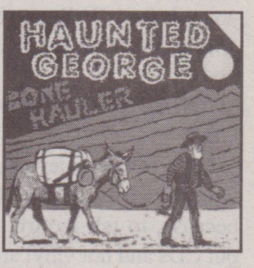
LAST ROUND UP – "The Demos 1987-1993" CD
Apparently this band is from the Inland Empire, which lays just to the east of Los Angeles. They play no-bullshit fast and aggressive punk with harshly growled vocals. Apparently they have reformed and have the singer from OPPRESSED LOGIC playing bass for them. I find this interesting, because LAST ROUND UP kind of sounds like OPPRESSED LOGIC. Regardless, I just don't see the point in putting out a CD of fairly average demo recordings of a band that is pretty much unknown. I mean, if they are officially reformed, then record something new and be done with it. (RC)
(Half-Life, PO Box 227232, E. Los Angeles, CA 90022, www.halfliferecords.com)

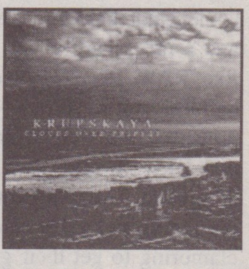
LEMURIA – "In a World of Ghosts/Who Would Understand a Truth"
"In a World of Ghosts" is by far the best song I've heard from this Buffalo, NY pop band. Sheena's voice loses the saccharine cuteness that always kinda bugged me before and sounds more subtle and beautiful. The somber male backup vocals blend wonderfully, and the music rests pretty solidly in the vein of DISCOUNT. The B-side is more vocally driven with minimal rockin', and a little too Lilith Fair sounding for my tastes, but the heavy parts are nice and on par with the A-side. This limited edition 7" is Volume 10 in the Art of the Underground's Single Series. It's already sold out but will be available again as part of a year-end box set. (PC)
(Art of the Underground, www.artoftheunderground.com)

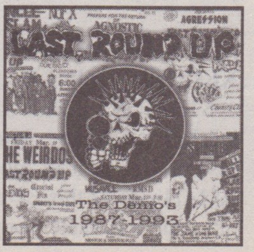
LEWD ACTS – "On Lonely Nights" EP
This fast hardcore band out of Southern California has











a moshy sound not unlike the Lockin' Out bands from a few years back. The songs themselves are pretty good, but after reading the lyric sheet, I was disappointed in song titles like "Womanipulation," "That Time of the Month," and "San Diego Transmitted Disease." Misogynistic overtones aside, lyrics like these leave a lot to be desired. Pass. (CC)
(Eating Rats, www.eatingrats.com)

LIVE GIRLS / NONS – split EP

NONS reminds me of late period HUGGY BEAR, like the *Children Absent from Heaven Says...* EP, or maybe even the *Weaponry Listens to Love* LP. It's a kind of minimalist, garage-y, post punk destruction, not quite as distinctive or, uh, great as HUGGY BEAR but totally good basement underground muffled art noise. LIVE GIRLS is made up of members of various Canadian art punk bands that I haven't really heard of such as CHANNELS 3&4, MODERN CREATURES, TWIN CRYSTALS. The music reminds me of late-era Gravity Records stuff, like the VICIOUS GINKS, or maybe parts of ANTIOCH ARROW. It's a little too 31G message board antics for me, but you know maybe I just listened to too much of this style as a teenager. Maybe that last statement would really bum them out? Maybe they are thinking they are proto punk rather than Spock morgue? Whatevers. Generally a cool looking and sounding 45, and what more can you ask for...Well, maybe I want more. (LG)
(Grotesque Modern, no address)

MANDIDO RESPIRO – "An Eye on Us" CD

Most of the reviewer copies of CDs I get are either given away, or just thrown in the garbage because, to tell the truth, most bands that put out CDs and not vinyl aren't very good most of the time. This band, however, fucking jams! MANDIDO RESPIRO from Italy kicks out some great hardcore tracks with good sound and a nice sharp edge. Reminiscent of bands like RAW POWER and JERRY'S KIDS in delivery, not in sound—just total fast, furious, powerful, and full of energy. The art on this disk leaves a lot to wish for but that is the only complaint. Throw this in generic '80s hardcore packaging and you would have all kinds of kids clamoring to get their grubby little fingers on it. Meat and potatoes hardcore. (WK)
(Wet Breath)

MIND OF ASIAN / STRAIGHT EDGE KEGGER – split LP

STRAIGHT EDGE KEGGER screeches and belches out frantic, intense, and well-played fastcore-influenced punk. The MIND OF ASIAN side of this LP will boil the skin clean off your miserable body; this is an essential blast of fierce and aggressive hardcore/punk from this crucial Japanese outfit. I can't find my old review of *Chinmoku No Kiri No Naka*—these tracks are all on there, I think this split LP may have been delayed for over a year. One of my favorite releases of that year. Awesome! (BS)
(Torture Garden Picture Company, torturegardenpictures@hotmail.com)

MILWAUKEE WILDMEN – "Strike Back" CD

Apparently these boys (a trio) have been at it for twelve years. Goin' psycho to the bone, etc. To their credit, they actually mix it up a fair bit in the ol' psychobilly genre. A bit of punk, bit of speed-metal riffing, lots of pop (on their best cuts, they sound not a million miles away from the STRAY CATS), and they even make the METEORS sound interesting on one of the two covers they enliven. If you dig stand-up bass, quaffs, and creepers, then I suspect you'll find this top of the pack... (RK)
(Drunkabilly, www.drunkabilly.com)

MISGUIDED – "Fuggets" CD

From the same label that reissued the URBAN WASTE EP and the NIHILISTICS LP (not to mention the excellent MAJOR CONFLICT CD) comes a discography from another early NYC hardcore band, MISGUIDED. Existing from 1981 to 1984, MISGUIDED was from the first generation of New York "hardcore" bands—those, such as KRAUT, who took their influences from the UK rather than LA or DC. (In other words, don't expect ANTIDOTE or THE ABUSED... MISGUIDED were slower and less heavy.) Since the band only ever put out two EPs, this 35-track CD is made up of mostly demo and live songs, spanning their earliest visit to a studio through their second-to-last-show. As a former member puts it in the liner notes, half of the CD is "a band learning to crawl"—and I'm not inclined to disagree. In fact, "half" is kinda generous, and judging from the rough nature of even the later material, the band never made it too far past the "crawl" stage. Anyway, the best stuff on here is definitely the two proper EPs (unfortunately placed at the end of the disc), which are pretty good—imagine *United Blood*-era AGNOSTIC FRONT trying to struggle through a set of KRAUT songs, and you'll get an idea of the raw, inept, but catchy and powerful early NYHC dished out by this band at their peak. "Defy Standards" could even be considered a minor classic... Anyway, to call this CD an essential reissue would be wrong, but nonetheless it's an interesting document for early-'80s punk completists. (CS)
(Mad at the Word, PO Box 20227, Tompkins Square Station, New York, NY 10009, www.matwrecords.com)

MOSQUITO BANDITO – "One Man Bandit" EP

Ill-named one-man band action from Philadelphia. Mr. Bandito distinguishes himself from the pack by having letting the sonic spectacle and theatrical over-the-top bashing commonly associated with this simmer, drawing your attention front and center to the tunes, which ain't half bad, coincidentally. With the OMB glut currently reaching its peak, I can't imagine any casual fan or potential investigators being blown away by anything heard here...but obsessives are why the 7" vinyl format is making a comeback. Really. I read it in *Time* magazine. (MC)
(Sqoodge, www.squoodge.de)

MUTATORS – "Nerves" EP

I kind of liked this. It's really treble-y, harsh garage with the emphasis on the punk; they cover "My War" and it is a good call. Girl vocals howled out, the best riff ever maybe, but where BLACK FLAG makes the song about the inner turmoil of the children of 'Nam vets, MUTATORS makes it about nothing. Mall car parks, boredom, bratty discontent rather than black rage; there's no doom, just nothing, and it somehow makes you feel worse. Like, "My War" should make you feel part of something, some kind of otherness, whereas this just makes you feel like there's nothing to feel part of somehow. I am not explaining it right, but it made me think about how BLACK FLAG mythologize the alienated male experience, make it into a role, the acceptable face of emotion for dudes, and this fucks with that but I can't figure it out exactly. *Anyway...* I am sure I am over-thinking it. Mostly these youths play trashed out punk, made me think of something that could have come out on Kill Rock Stars or Gravity or even K on 45 in the early '90s. They use keyboards, they are from Vancouver. (LG)
(Grotesque Modern, no address)

THE NEW FLESH – "Vessel" CD

Here is a hell of an art band from Baltimore, Maryland. I wouldn't really consider this punk from the sound, which is fine because music doesn't really have to fit into the category to be part. They call it punk—I researched it on the internet. I would compare them to bands like SONIC YOUTH or the JESUS LIZARD. They are really discordant and the music kind of creates soundscapes, never really getting that intense but rather haunting and mid-tempo. No lyric sheet. If you like indie rock bands and smoking tons of weed this is for you. (WK)
(Heart Break Beat, heartbreakbeatrecords.com)

NO GOAL – "Demo XXX" EP

This is a fucking awesome record! Five

songs of total old school-sounding New York hardcore, and I'm talking about the good stuff here, not suburban posi core shit. The lyrics are screamed so angrily that the singer has since had to move over to guitar since his throat was bleeding! The music is fast and powerful. Imagine BROTHERHOOD mixed with the first SICK OF IT ALL and JUDGE EPs. Recommended! (BG)
(Third Party, www.thirdxparty.com)

NO REST – "Todos os Disfarces" LP
NO REST is from Brazil, and has an older EP and a previous LP. *Todos os Disfarces*, which I believe means "All the Disguises," is the second full-length by this female-fronted hardcore band. Track one had my attention and lead me into the record with a similar feeling I had when I first heard their last LP. Lyrically, this record goes the introspective route—it's smart and political but there is no sloganeering here. Instead, there are well thought out lyrics presented in a non-dogmatic way but not falling into total vagueness. Musically, this LP pulls away a bit from their older style and goes in a different direction, as there seems to be more of a metal influence this time around due to technical guitar parts. Aline's vocals are totally ripping—she loses her shit screaming that way, it is quite awesome. I just feel that musically the songs are a bit too long for my liking…a lot of changes and gear shifting within all the songs; at moments I was thinking mid-period NEUROSIS or even some TRAGEDY mixed in. It's very anthemic—fans of this style should take note. I know there are folks who will love this but it started to lose me and become too monotonous. (MS)
(Aid Necessario, norest@norest.com.br)

NO TURNING BACK – "Holding On" CD
Everything on here is huge: the production, the backup vocals, even the mosh parts. This is pretty much what you've come to expect from Bridge 9 Records. With the globalization of hardcore and punk, it's no surprise that a band from the Netherlands can pull off a NYHC record better than most actual NYHC bands. This is well worth looking into if you are a fan of bands like TERROR or NO WARNING. (CC)
(Bridge 9, www.bridge9.com)

THE OBSESSORS – "Double Scoop" CD
Female-fronted, melodic, dare-I-even-say pop punk that sounds like the type of band that would play backyard parties as the band that just knows everybody but no one actually cares for. I won't say this is bad, but I wouldn't buy it when I come across it in the dollar bin, just because I have a thousand better records in my collection. If you only have 20 records in your collection you would still have to wonder how often you would play the 21st worst one. (JF)
(Braindart, c/o Aaron Oman, 1159 Midpine Ave, San Jose, CA 95122, www.theobsessors.com)

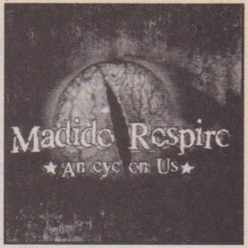
ODD ZERO – CD
Musically this isn't too bad, but I would say it's a bit more standard, hard bar-rock than most readers of this fine magazine would care to stomach. This reminds me of all those great hardcore bands in the late '80s who grew their hair out and started playing metallic rock. I mean, the music was OK, I guess, but I couldn't understand why someone would want to play hard rock instead of hardcore, y'know? I feel the same way about this band. Some of these songs are catchy, and the Don Fury production is top-notch, but I wouldn't recommend this. (BG)
(www.oddzero.net)

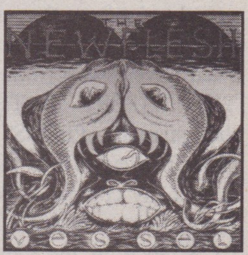
OFF WITH THEIR HEADS – "Please Don't Call the Cops on Me/Big Mouth"
The band to beat. Seriously. Beat these fuckers up. Why we allow bands this good to pollute our scene is beyond me. They think they're better than shitty bands or something? They're over here with their catchy songs of depression, hostility, unrest, and arrests, their guest bass by a fat DILLINGER-y guy from another Minneapolis band, their fucking awesome B-side cover of the MUFFS "Big Mouth"…these guys are fucked and I'm not going to take it any more. I wish old Tim was here today. We'd have these assholes on the cover with nooses around their necks! You think you're so fucking cool with your ganglehoff. We'll see about that! (ST)
(Art of the Underground, www.artoftheunderground.com)

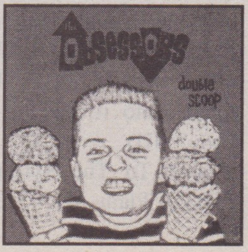
OWEN HART – "Those Goddamn Devil Eyes" EP
A curious release. An odd band name (a pro-wrestler), a one-sided 7", and a black metal logo on the side with music. So I was surprised to hear a raw metalcore/metalish heavy hardcore sound. The vocals sound sorta shitty and I think it's on purpose. I should mention this isn't shitty mainstream metalcore, but more along the lines of GRAF ORLOCK or COMADRE. I love the head down grinding death metal section in the first 30 seconds of the first track, nice guttural vocals. Sounds like the sort of band I'd rather go see live than own a one-sided 7" they put out. (MH)
(Dood, www.doodrecords.com)

PALEHORSE – "Amongst the Flock" CD
I've started to think that an easy way to distinguish between metalish hardcore bands is: Do they have lots of breakdowns or not? Lots of gang vocals, chugging heavy guitars, vocals you can understand, and…breakdowns, lots of breakdowns. You'd probably also ask the question: Are they straightedge or not? PALEHORSE falls in with bands like INTEGRITY and HATEBREED, and after around 20 years of bands that sound like this it takes a lot for me to like one. I like PALEHORE more than most, mainly because their lyrics are better, covering conformity, the current state of America, war, work/greed, and a handful of other topics. This is still for those who like this sound; it won't convert anyone. (MH)
(Bridge Nine, www.bridge9.com)

PEAR OF THE WEST – "In the Dark" EP
Woohoo! Girl pop! The first thing I thought when I dropped the needle was FASTBACKS, and that can only be good…the second thing was the POPGUNS, and the third CIGARETTEMAN. Being that they come from Japan, and I'm terribly narrow-minded—I think they might have something to do with CIGARETTEMAN—I







mean how many girl singers can there *be* over there?! This is super. (AD)
(Snuffy Smiles, 12-A Kamikousaicho, Shichiku, Kita-Ku, Kyoto 603-8117, JAPAN)

PEABODYS – "Awkward Age" EP
Good, solid pop punk that is better than a lot of the crap being put out there today. While the PEABODYS aren't doing anything super special they do mix it up enough to differentiate from the normal SCREECHING WEASEL/QUEERS clones. One thing I do know is that their thank you list reads like a who's who of the pop punk message board. (JF)
(Infringement, 2833 NE Sandy Blvd, Portland, OR 97201)

PEDESTRIANS – "Ideal Divide" 12"
The follow-up to last year's excellent *Future Shock* LP, *Ideal Divide* finds PEDESTRIANS mainly staying true to their signature mid-tempo melodic style, though there is some musical progression evident in the added guitar lines throughout the record. Eight songs this time around makes for a more focused statement and leaves no room for filler. In other words, if you liked this band's previous output, you will surely dig this new 12". I always got the feeling that PEDESTRIANS was likened to old Chicago bands like THE EFFIGIES (huh?) simply because they happened to be from that city, but I honestly feel their sound is a bit more akin to bands from the Pacific Northwest (running the spectrum from THE WIPERS to THE OBSERVERS)—though really, PEDESTRIANS has a unique style, particularly in the vocal delivery, that makes any comparisons fall short. Of course, highly recommended. (CS)
(A Wrench in the Gears, PO Box 476903, Chicago, IL 60647)

PERMANENT TRIP – "Losing Ground" EP
Man, I got some weird shit to review this month!! I believe this is the debut EP from Albany's PERMANENT TRIP. Three tracks of burly-as-fuck hardcore, with a (believe it!) stoner bent. This one is def taking some ballsy chances with some mildly showy guitar leads and some stoner-y, take-a-goddamn-bong-rip, wah-pedal-your-face-off, SABBATH-ian jam parts that are usually a no-no in the world of HC like this. Hell, they thank only one person and marijuana! This motherfucker shreds! Kinda like IMPACT UNIT getting the fuck down with MAN IS THE BASTARD. I'm totally into it. Again, where's my reviewer copy? (JU)
(Shock To The System, PO Box 300991, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130)

PULLING TEETH – "Vicious Teeth" 10"
This Maryland metalcore outfit is musically very impressive. The production is fucking heavy, and the songwriting sounds enough like INTEGRITY and RINGWORM to keep my attention through all eleven songs. My only complaint is the vocals. While not bad, they don't rise to the brutality of the music. I like my deep guttural screams with bands like this, but unfortunately the vocalist here has more of a high, raspy yell. (CC)
(A389, www.A389records.com)

THE QUEERS – "Love Songs for the Retarded" CD
A reissue of this oldie but goody release from this former Lookout band. 1992 really marked the return of THE QUEERS with this pop punk classic. From the glory days of SCREECHING WEASEL and GREEN DAY, these punk party-ers held their ground in that huge scene. "Ursula," "Fuck This World," and "You're Tripping" bring back some great memories. (RL)
(Asian Man, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030)

RADIO DEAD ONES – "Killers and Clowns" LP
Good, melodic punk with a big CLASH influence. Whereas a lot of this stuff comes off too clean and safe, RADIO DEAD ONES bring it rough and upbeat with gravelly vocals and group chanted choruses—think RANCID, THE EXPLOSION, and BOMBSHELL ROCKS meet the Gainesville scene of yesteryear. Not as good as, say, THE BELTONES, but better than say, THE FORGOTTEN. They're from East Germany and pretty glam looking; one of them looks like a bird. (AD)
(Wanda, Kludas, Rosa Luxembourg Str. 23, 06618 Naumberg, GERMANY)

RAKKAUS – "Kuolevan Maailman Hiljainen Kirous" EP
Another Finnish hardcore record chock-full of unpronounceable words, and you know what? I'm still not tired of it. Yes, this is the last review I have to do for this issue, but right now RAKKAUS is calming my nerves, so I will try my best to describe them. They are a female-fronted hardcore punk. They play fast and catchy two-minute songs. Driving vocals and drums are a plus. Good fucking lyrical content and delivery. What the fuck else do you need? (WK)
(Tuska Ja Ahdistus, www.elisanet.fi)

RANDOM 55 – "Successful Attempts at Failure" CD
I'm tired of RAMONES, NAKED RAYGUN, SOCIAL DISTORITION, BAD RELIGION, CLASH influenced punk. At least of the variety that seem to come out every week. To me, influences are things that should work in the background. Things that subtly drive what you're doing. They're not supposed to provide you with a playbook that you can write boring shitty music to. I also don't like one-sheets that tell me about your growing fanbases and indicate "Focus Tracks." That's just personal prerogative though. More than anything I really don't like this record. If it wasn't so irritating I'd put it on to bore myself to sleep. (ST)
(Sinister Music, www.sinistermusic.com)

THE RATCHETS – "Glory Bound" CD
Good soulful punk rock with similarities to THE CLASH, RANCID, and SMALLTOWN without as much distortion. From New Jersey, these guys go for that retro feel and pull it off with quality songs. I hope these guys don't go unnoticed due to lack of punk attire because this may be one of the year's best full-lengths. (RL)
(Pirates Press, www.piratespress.com)

THE RATS / SHUT THE FUCK UP – split EP
Yes! The good people at Thrash Bastard Records from Berlin, Germany have delivered some high-powered raw punk for you! Thrash Bastard seven-inch number seven features SHUT THE FUCK UP from Germany, turning in a fast, hectic set of five crazed hardcore punk tunes. SHUT THE FUCK UP employs manic guitar playing, solid bass lines, and drums to punctuate the whole dizzying mess. The lyrics express frustration, anger, and disappointment. Listen to "Better Hide"—that song is fucking punk! On the B side you lucky fucks get THE RATS from Umeå, Sweden. THE RATS start the punk venom flowing with "Share or Die." This raunchy punk number unfolds into a melodic triumph! The chaos continues on song two with the brutal lesson called "Parking Lot Justice." Fuck yes! THE RATS clobber you once more with "Out of Control"—a formidable punk guitar and drum assault. This is great shit! This split EP is highly recommended!! (BR)
(Thrash Bastard, c/o Andrea Knobloch, Warschauer St 57, 10243 Berlin, GERMANY, thrashxbastard@yahoo.de)

THE RATS – "We Are the Rats" EP
Fast hardcore that brings WHAT HAPPENS NEXT to mind. Quick drum parts and fast ass playing with vocals that remind me of Mr. Morf meets the vocalist of UPRIGHT CITIZENS; this is good stuff. Side two of this EP has these really awesome mid-paced killer

tracks that make this an even better record then I would have guessed. Very reminiscent of a lot of the stuff going on from 1999 to 2003. THE RATS pull it off without coming across as wannabes, so that's a relief. The overall "rats" theme is a bit cheesy but nevertheless if you need your hardcore fast and tight you may want to check this out. (MS)
(Thrash Bastard, thrashxbastard@yahoo.de)

RAW POWER – "Reptile House & Live" CD+DVD

This double-disc release pairs a reissue of *Reptile House*, RAW POWER's seventh full-length studio album (did it ever sell out in the first place?), with a DVD "documentary" of their 1998 US tour. Now, I'm of the opinion that RAW POWER's *Screams from the Gutter* LP is the finest punk record ever to come out of Italy. *Reptile House*, while a decent effort and nowhere near as embarrassing as the band's late-'80s foray in to heavy metal, is still a far cry from the feverish driving energy of their early records. The simple, catchy rockin' hardcore is there, but the rawness and excitement is long gone. The included DVD is not so much a documentary of anything as it is simply "home video"-style clips shot while the band was on tour in America. Interesting perhaps for the individuals who were there at the time, but not for me. Fortunately there is some cool, if poor quality bonus footage of the band playing live in the '80s and recording their *After Your Brain* LP—including, inexplicably, several fucking weird and awesome songs by West Virginia's TH' INBRED. Now that's a DVD I'd really like to check out… (CS)
(Toxic Ranch, PO Box 2091, Tucson, AZ 85702, www.toxicranchrecords.com)

RELIGIOUS AS FUCK – "Priorities" EP

Fast-paced and edgy hardcore punk out of Gainesville, Florida. Landing somewhere in sound between VOID and CAUSTIC CHRIST, yet clearing their own trail toward the dark path to oblivion. Good stuff. (BS)
(Vinyl Rites, PO Box 924, Gainesville, Fl, 32602, vinylrites@gmail.com)

THE RETAINERS – "Teenage Regrets" EP

Fast, catchy, distorted punk noise. Yeah, this is just the shit I like. Four songs packed in a classic punk-style sleeve: a manila envelope chopped in half and spray-painted. Plus any band that has a song called "Kill My Boss" has to be cool and this band definitely is. (CK)
(Fashionable Idiots, PO Box 580131, Minneapolis, MN 55458, www.fashionableidiots.com)

RETOX SHOCK / USELESS WOODEN TOYS – EP

Minneapolis' USELESS WOODEN TOYS may have the record cover of the year on their side with a punk zombie on a skateboard decapitating jocks, rednecks, and businessmen with a chainsaw. Hilarious. The lyrics are similar—kind of PHC/FYP/funny-dork-punk stuff about the punk scene, metal posers, and possums. The music of the five tracks however is hyper-manic, speedy guitar driven hardcore with furious throttling grind-style drumming and a forceful dual vocal attack. RETOX SHOCK delivers two tracks with a more extended and structured delivery and scalding vocals over charging, mid-tempo hardcore, with wild, scalding vocals complementing grind-inspired drum throttling, expansive melodic intros, and squealing guitar solos. No lyrics. A solid split! (KS)
(www.myspace.com/uselesswoodentoys)

RIPTIDES – "Hang Out" CD

Pretty mediocre pop punk in a RAMONES/SCREECHING WEASEL vein. I was a little disappointed, as this is the label that released THE LILLINGTONS new album and it has Mass Giorgini's name accociated with it. It's not that it's that bad—it is upbeat and catchy—it's just nothing spectacular. (AD)
(Red Scare)

RIVERDALES – CD

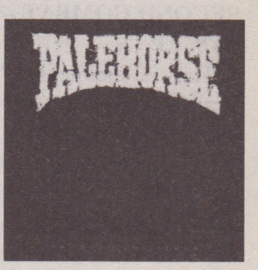
Asian Man has re-released (but not remastered?) the first RIVERDALES album and tacked on a live show and a few other extra tracks. Kind of a spin-off of SCREECHING WEASEL, the RIVERDALES played the RAMONES card even more to the fore, and cut out all the more poppy, angrier, faster, eccentric parts that made SCREECHING WEASEL so much...well...fun. The RIVERDALES were a good band on their own merits, and I love this album, but it's just not the same, and not just because there's no Jughead, it's just not as much...well...fun. Still, some of these songs rank up there amongst anything from the motherband—there's the Rev Norb's radio rant on "Fun Tonight," "I Think About You During the Commercials" is pure Weasel, as well as a great forlorn punk love ballad, and one of the best song titles ever...but it's the original album's last song "In Your Dreams" that really brings back the memories and the chills, as it's an almost Orbisonian classic, pure goose-pimple material. So if you never got this...it's now got extra tracks and a nicer cover. (AD)
(Asian Man, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030)

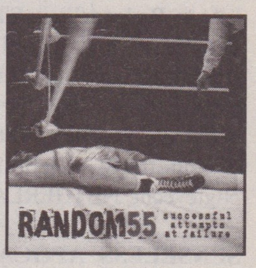
THE RUINED – "Here Lies…" CD

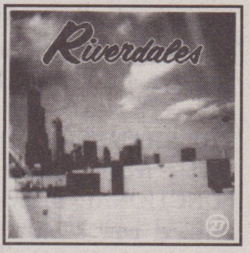
Sci-fi horror punk can go so very very very wrong. We're all agreed on that one right? Sorry to beat a dead horse. It can go real right too with bands like THE MISFITS and THE LILLINGTONS. The former is the reason we have horror punk in the first place and the latter renewed my faith it in. THE RUINED is right in the middle. Right in the middle of good and bad and right in the middle stylistically of THE MISFITS and THE LILLINGTONS. There's also a little touch of mid-period AFI in there too, which I actually like so bite me. I hate to be inconclusive but in the end I'm on the fence here. I don't want to punch them in the face but I'm not ready to give them a hug. There's a possibility that this will grow on me. The booklet art and *Army of Darkness* samples are solid though. I'll give you that. (ST)
(Rowdy Farrago, www.destructors666.com)

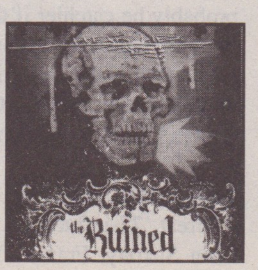
SCHIFOSI – "Absentium Existence" CD

If you deeply enjoy brutal raging vocals over heavy melodic crust, then the crust gods have smiled upon you, my friend!…Sorry, I mean, no gods no masters, no crust









lords. Anyway, this record is a total rager with well-conceived political lyrics. It's really hard to stand out (in a good way) as a crust band, but they manage to do it here with the intensity of the vocals and the heaviness of the sound. Very cool. (AA)
(Thrash Steady Syndicate, Blk 11, Toa Payoh, Lorong 8, #03-310, SINGAPORE 310011. www.thrashsteadysyndicate.com)

SECOND COMBAT – "What Has Inspired Us?" EP
This is the debut 7" by this Malaysian straight edge band, after holding it down for the past ten years. This one's got it all: blast beats, a bunch of DAG NASTY or later TURNING POINT style guitar leads (actually most of the guitar parts on this platter are oozing with some semblance of melody), some out-of-nowhere screeching back-up vocals, gang choruses, and I swear the intro to "Worth Life to Redeem" is a STRAY CATS riff! The B-side of this record is definitely more straight-forward and less all over the map than the flip. I can't say I'm that into this but their hearts are absolutely in the right place! (JU)
(Commitment, Klein Muiden 381393 RL Nigtevecht, NETHERLANDS)

SENSELESS APOCALYPSE / SLIGHT SLAPPERS – split CD
I've decided, after all these years of listening to music like these two bands, that this style is neither hardcore nor metal. It is between these two things. Fast, spastic, heavy, and noisy. We could throw lots of genre names around like fastcore, thrash, powerviolence, but none really do these two Japanese legends justice. Both bands have been around more than ten years. I like the SENSELESS APOCALYPSE tracks. They are tight and fast. The SLIGHT SLAPPERS tracks are super noisy, almost lo-fi, with tons of feedback. Each band also covers one of the other bands songs. (MH)
(Blurred, 482-1 Kambaranaka, Shimizu, Shizuoka 421-3213, JAPAN, http://blurred.tv)

THE SHANKS – "Cut Me" EP
This record sounds like an ode to the FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS. It's actually amazing how similar the two bands sound. Each has herky-jerky rhythms and emotive singer. The SHANKS songs, however, would probably be catchier if they dropped the overly annoying and constant guitar soloing. The sound of it makes me cringe. It doesn't belong on this type of record. (CK)
(Boom Chick, www.boomchickrecords.com)

THE SHOEMAKERS – "Turn Me On" LP
Great '77-influenced punk rock all the way from Saxony, France. THE SHOEMAKERS pack the punch of THE BODIES, the head-bopping choruses of THE BRIEFS, and a sprinkling of some of the cocked lipped sneer of THE STITCHES. Thirteen tracks, no filler, each one a winner. (SD)
(Wanda Klaudas, Rosa Luxemburgstr 23 06618, Naumburg, GERMANY, www.wandarecords.de)

SNAKE FLOWER – "Turn Back Time" EP
"…carries the dreamy sound of great bands such as MOVE, CHOCOLATE WATCHBAND, and LOVE…" says the press release, but I'd call it closer to DONOVAN than the CHOCOLATE WATCHBAND. Not bad songs, but they sound like demos more than fully-realized productions which, for me, doesn't work when going for the "dreamy" sound. (DD)
(Shake Your Ass, www.syarecords.it)

SLIGHT SLAPPERS – "Vinyl Collection 1995-2001" CD
It's been quite a while since I've listened to this band, but I used to love them and own all of the records compiled on this CD. For the uninitiated, SLIGHT SLAPPERS plays ferociously fast powerviolence. If the blast beats don't get you, the ballistic vocals will. There are just enough tempo changes to keep you engaged, but at the center of it all is that crazy over-the-top speed and aggression. I had the privilege of seeing them a few times on their West Coast tours and they were really mind-blowing to watch. I will never forget how high the singer would jump in the air off of the bass drum. One thing of note, I think it is funny that their 2" record that Slap A Ham put out is mentioned in the CD booklet. I wish there was someway that Chris could have figured out how to put music on that tiny piece of vinyl. Regardless, do yourself a favor, pick this up and get ready to thrash hard! (RC)
(Blurred, 482-1 Kambaranaka, Shimizu, Shizuoka 421-3213, JAPAN)

SNUGGLE / WHISKEY SUNDAY – split EP
This split features two fine bands that owe a debt to the melodic punk scene of the late '80s/early '90s. Seattle's SNUGGLE kicks things off with a sound that would please fans of JAWBREAKER or SNUFF, as well as fans of the punker Plan-It-X stuff. Jerome's vocals are meant for the type of upbeat but cynical punk that he plays. When listening to WHISKEY SUNDAY, the first thing that pops into my head is LEATHERFACE. Really, if you are a fan of LEATHERFACE, you should find WHISKEY SUNDAY a good listen. A rare split where both sides are worth the price of admission. (JF)
(Vinehell, PO Box 36131, San Jose, CA 95158, www.vinehell.com)

THE SPARK – "Nobody's Laughing" LP
The SPARK has come a long way since their first few EPs. While still rooted in "simple" fast hardcore, they aren't just sticking to the same formula on this LP. Tracks like "Then the Cops Showed Up," "Timebomb," and "Funny Like a Funeral" really showcase a rocking BL'AST/BLACK FLAG influence that I can get behind. This is some good stuff. (CC)
(Mike Fitzgerald, 652 Evelyn Ave, East Meadow, NY 11554-5427)

SPERM CRICKETS – "Orgasm of Species" EP
This starts out just blazing and speeds through ten tracks of blastbeat-laden, unpolished juvenile thrash. It occasionally lets up for some weird part but takes off again in no time. Nothing groundbreaking but it holds my attention. I assume this was recorded some time ago, as it's pre-CLOROX GIRLS and CRIME DESIRE. I can't say it sounds even remotely like the CGs, but it would probably appeal to CD fans. Clay, send me my reviewer copy c/o the *MRR* PO Box. Thanks. (JU)
($5 ppd: Sledgehammered Back To Life, 239 Mohawk Ave, Norwood, PA 19074)

SSS – "CDC" EP
Metal-infused crossover thrash with enough riffage and posturing to get almost any denim wearing dirthead to run in a circle. I mean, they have a photo of Cliff Burton on the cover of the record, for fuck's sake. Unfortunately I could not get into the growling barks of the vocalist at all. I don't know if the vocals were too forward in the mix or it was just his delivery, but I didn't like it. Though they do get bonus points for having the song title of the month with "Thrash With A Small Moustache." They have a full-length coming out, which I would like to hear to see if the vocals work better for me because the music itself is ripping. (RC)
(Dead And Gone, www.deadandgonerecords.com)

LA STASI – "Con la Stasi" EP
Madrid currently has a nice little scene of snotty *Killed By Death* obsessives, and LA STASI is another to add to the list of bands, the best known of which outside of Spain is probably WEBELOS/GRUPO SUB-1. You know, this kind of catchy funnypunk has found a home in Madrid since the days of LARSEN and ESPASMODICOS, and while LA STASI

lacks the staying power of either of those bands (or the aforementioned *grupo*), I can imagine that their live presence is a fun, drunken good time and really, who can argue with the lo-fi, high-energy sounds of this kind of punk? Not me. (GN)
(Regresivos, www.discosregresivos.com)

STATUES – "New People Make Me Nervous" LP
Wow, a welcome new discovery for me. Mining the same updated pop-punk/powerpop/mod-punk vein as SMALLTOWN or current faves (and co-Canucks) TRANZMITORS, with a hint of a less-snotty BRIEFS and a literary JAWBREAKER-esque quality to the lyrics. Great stuff, recorded well and with great catchy choruses. Sounds authentic but not retro. Eight songs at 45rpm for max. auditory effect. Apparently the CD has five more songs—boo! If those extra songs were any good they'd be on the vinyl. You don't need 'em! (AM)
(Radio 81, www.radio81records.com)

STNNNG – "Fake Fake" CD
This band is absolutely the sum of its influences—not a bad thing if your influences are NOMEANSNO, SHELLAC, and JESUS LIZARD. I've listened to this twice now, and while the sound is definitely punishing, I can't say any particular song grabbed me. There's a lot going on and they definitely push the rock factor full-time, perhaps lacking the dynamics of some of the bands I mentioned. This is '90s underground rock like they can only do in the Midwest, although thousands of Germans every year try to replicate the effect. I imagine they are amazing live. (AM)
(Modern Radio, PO Box 8886, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.modern-radio.com)

THINK FAST – "In the Name of Fun" EP
With a name like THINK FAST, I was expecting this to sound like something out of the '97 youth crew scene, but instead I was greeted with some pretty righteous, thrashy hardcore out of Arizona. Song topics range from anything to meathead jocks to Phoenix pride. Fans of early SUICIDAL TENDENCIES will not be disappointed. (CC)
(Thrash Attack, www.thrashattack.com)

THIS IS MY FIST – "A History of Rats" LP
Some had this band down as sunk without a trace, but finally their first long-player has seen the glorious light of day, and more importantly beating Axl Rose to the finishing line. The Bay Area's toughest workhorses and one of the best bands live goddamn it, through twelve tracks of politically-charged super catchy punk gems straight at your fixed gear face. Mixing some of that camp fire folk punk of AGAINST ME! (oops, sorry did I just curse?) some of that gruff Northern roughness of LEATHERFACE, and a healthy helping of that pumping fist-in-the-air sing-along appeal of THE GRABASS CHARLESTONS. This one also comes with a high recommendation on the lyric sheet—read it and you might just learn something. Now boys and girl, stop being AEROSMITH or THE WHO—too much studio time makes jack a dull boy—and get out another slap of greatness, pronto. (SD)
(No Idea, P0 Box 14636, Gainesville, Fl 32604, www.noidearecords.com)

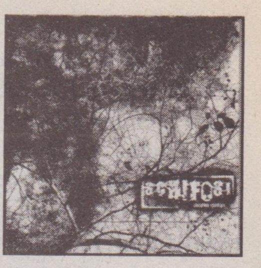
TOXIN III – "1983 Demos" EP
These monaural demos are a valuable document, and not only for the music (a no-frills recording at a Lafayette music store). While never their greatest fan (even here, their style of raucous hardcore lacks a distinctive edge), the power of all eight songs brings back memories of THE NEOS, or perhaps a more ragged POISON IDEA. Fans will be especially pleased by the two-page TOXIN III history that accompanies the disk. (SS)
(Psycho Wolf, no address)

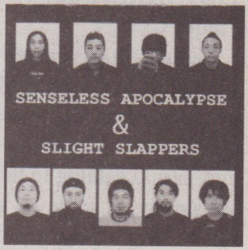
TWENTYSEVENSHOTS – "Grounded" EP
Wow, this took me by surprise. From the "tagger"-style writing on the sleeve I expected some positive youth crew, and while there are elements of that, it's drowned out by TRAGEDY/LEATHERFACE-style "dark melody" and vocals that are reminiscent of INTEGRITY in places. The lyrics are negative and depressive to boot. Catchy songwriting and guitar leads, but nothing as saccharine as the term "melodic hardcore" might suggest. I think I can get behind this: negative-youth-crew! (AM)
($4 ppd: 2705 Garfield Ave Apt #1, Minneapolis, MN 55408, twentysevenshots@hotmail.com)

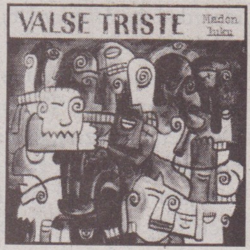
UNDER PRESSURE – LP
This release from Winnipeg's premier hardcore punk band—the LP version of a CD from a while back—is more of the same brutalness they've been putting out the last few years. Influences are of the POISON IDEA, GAUZE, WIPERS variety, which as you can imagine works out to a great sound. The only bummer is the vocals are not as great as previous recordings, the deep, growling, macho vocals come off forced and tired. But, you know what? I'm nitpicking. This is solid record that shreds from start to finish. (AA)
(Primitive Air-Raid, www.primitiveairraid.com)

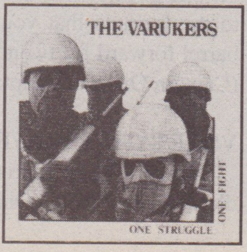
UPSHIT CREEK – "Around the @" EP
DIY melodic punk from Portland with a nice '90s indie feel to it that would sound just as at home on Deep Elm as on Lookout! This is very, very CHRIMP-SHRINE-y, and I like it… (AD)
($3 ppd: Dan Nowhere, 514 NE Jarrett St, Portland, OR 97211)

VALSE TRISTE – "Madon Luku" LP
Impressive twenty-song second full-length LP by this now-venerable Finnish band that has been around since 1983. Instead of treading the straight and narrow "classic Finnish hardcore" path, this is wild and chaotic experimental hardcore, charged with energy and unpredictability, and refined by the band's growth in precision, skill, and delivery. Dual vocals create a new zenith of "caustic" and "scalding" as they shout and spew over herky-jerky hardcore that seems to meet somewhere in between









the bass-driven time-changing of NOMEANSNO and the swaggering, loose ram-charging of KAAOS. The lyrics (in translation from Finnish) are similarly offbeat, but deftly hide meaning in metaphor. Excellent recording and a nice gatefold; adventurous listeners take note. (KS)
(Kamaset Levyt, www.punkinfinland.net/kamanen)

THE VARUKERS – "One Struggle, One Fight" CD
Captain Oi has graced the gluebag-addicted, sing-along loving world of UK82 punk fans with countless CD reissues over the past few years, and now you can add the VARUKERS' mid-period catalog to that list. I admit that I'm not nearly as huge of a VARUKERS fan as some. They always struck me as being neither as powerful as DISCHARGE nor as catchy as the PARTISANS nor as crazed as DISORDER, though they do have some great songs. This LP, their second (after a slew of EPs and 12"s) finds them following early form, more or less along the lines of DISCHARGE with super simplistic riffs and sub-moronic lyrics about very complicated issues. This CD reissue also includes the *Massacred Millions 12"*, which predated the LP and is, in my opinion, the better record. Get the CD and I'm sure the matching buttflap is not far behind… (GN)
(Captain Oi!, www.captainoi.com)

THE VARUKERS – "Still Bollocks But Still Here" CD
This is somewhat a best-of collection for VARUKERS fans who could not acquire the original vinyl, although they left out some scorchers such as "Deadly Games" and "Another Religion, Another War," to name a few. What the hell though—you get 19 tracks here, so who's complaining? The songs are re-recorded versions from right before they recorded the *Murder* LP, and if you ask me the originals are a bit better mainly because I like the drum sound and the nice thick early-'80s production better. These are a bit rawer, albeit it is pretty amazing that a band whose lifespan has spanned most of the history of punk could still jam out these raw Dis-beat classics with such fury. I totally like all the VARUKERS records to date and that is pretty fucking impressive since so many bands can only pull off one good record at best. It's simple—stick to the formula that you started with and just barrel forward for twenty years. (WK)
(Captain Oi!, www.captainoi.com)

VEGETATIVE STATE – "Cracker" EP
Super lo-fi, amateurish punk from the middle wasteland that is Ohio. This shit could be a lost *Killed By Death* classic—snotty vocals, biscuit tin drums, and songs that sound like they are about to fall apart at any minute. Kinda like the Northwest band the PANICS or even an ANGRY SAMOANS practice tape. It's pretty crap, but I totally dig it. (TB)
(Death By Noise, myspace.com/deathbynoise)

THE VERTICALS – "The Verticals" LP
Finnish instro ("surfcore," says they) band that is smart enough to break up the surf with some dashes of other sounds (even a little swing) without getting wanky (though they give props to SANTANA on their dreaded MySpace page—fortunately I hear no Divadip influence here). Slickly recorded but still plenty energetic. (DD)
(Hell's Tone, www.lprhardcore)

VILENTLY ILL – "Where Is The Next Wave?" EP
This VILENTLY ILL dude (yeah, one dude) is really pissed. This thirteen-song single is coated in so much fed-up, bad attitude venom that it moves from a seemingly sincere document of one man's frustration to a chuckle-inducing noise riot. I recall some link (perhaps ideologically) to MR. CALIFORNIA, but the subject matter, bone-head factor, and embarrassingly fun vibe recalls a steroid-fueled version of THE SPITS. In VILENTLY ILL, you've either found a room-clearing novelty *or* your new messiah. Either way, VILENTLY ILL is the polar opposite of "worthless sappy emo tripe." (MC)
(Vilently Ill, PO Box 501, South Haven, MI 49090)

WESLEY COLEMAN – "Summer of '79" EP
Four tracks of garage power pop, almost on the brink of collapsing but managing to stay stumbling on its feet. Sounding cheap without actually feeling cheap, a HASIL ADKINS for our generation, a STARDUST COWBOY for the no-wavers or a PUSSY GALORE for the more pop sensible crowd. This could only come from Austin. Please make Wesley Coleman the new friend that your parents hate. (SD)
(Boom Chick, 6405 Morrill Avenue, Havelock, NE 68507)

WHEN SEASONS CHANGE – "Time Will Tell Us" EP
Modern Euro youth crew HC that owes a debt to the late-'80s Revelation scene. I hear a hint of DAG NASTY-esque melodic flourishes and bits of chugga-chugga here and there as well, but mostly this is hard and fast. Unfortunately, the only real distinctive characteristic to be found anywhere on this six-song EP is the seriously inept vocal delivery—otherwise I found it completely unmemorable. (CS)
(Commitment, Klein Muiden 38, 1393 RL Nigtevecht, NETHERLANDS, www.commitmentrecords.nl)

WHISKY DAREDEVILS – "The Essential..." CD
When you stumble across lyrics like "Bacon Martini in a 40-oz. glass/Line of cocaine off some hooker's ass" you might pause for a moment in silent thought. "Was it always thus," you might wonder. "Has rock music, in all its forms, always felt been so disposable, so predictable, so hollow at its core? Am I the one with the problem?" You might have enjoyed bottom-feeding schlock like early CRAMPS, HONEYMOON KILLERS, or even G.G. ALLIN at the peaks of his career...so, why do the WHISKY DAREDEVILS leave you colder than last week's Grape Nuts? Why doesn't their slickly-packaged rockabilly/punk hybrid work its unsubtle magic upon you? Maybe you're burned out, maybe you've heard one too many soundalikes on self-produced CDs, maybe the lowbrow-and-proud aesthetic as run its course...or maybe they just suck. Music for lamebrains with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. (JH)
(Knock Out, Postfach 10 07 16, 46527 Dinslaken, GERMANY)

WHISKEY SUNDAY / MORGUE SIDE CINEMA – split EP
Now in the interest of full disclosure I tell you that I've put out two WHISKEY SUNDAY records myself so I might be a little biased in my review. This fact also prepares me better than anyone else to describe the onslaught of San Jose that one side of this record is going to lay on ya'll. WHISKEY SUNDAY might not be the hardest working band but they are one of the hardest drinking and they write some of the most brutally catchy, throat full of rusty nails, heart of gold, occasionally sci-fi/horror obsessed punk songs you'll ever hear. There's two new songs and a MORGUE SIDE CINEMA cover on their half of this thing. "Timbuktu" the first track is worth the price of admission on this alone. MORGUE SIDE CINEMA is from Japan and couldn't make more sense on a record with WHISKEY SUNDAY. They have the same sort of rumbling, caustically anthemic style and their kicked in the side cover of WHISKEY SUNDAY's "Maldecido" at the end of this single fuses them together perfectly. (ST)
(Vinehell, PO Box 36131, San Jose, CA 95158, www.vinehell.com)

V/A – "Killed By a One Man Band!" EP

Fifteen one-man bands packed onto one seven-inch record. Being the resident *MRR* one-man band expert you'd thinking I'd be going crazy at the mere concept of it. There are some big names here: REVEREND BEAT MAN, JOHN SCHOOLEY, MARTIN VYLDE, but these fellows need more room to rock—thirty seconds just doesn't cut it. (CK)

(Drunk'n'Roll, www.drunknroll.de)

V/A – "Knockout…in the 8th Round" CD

Compilations made up of nearly all skinhead bands tend to send shudders down my spine, but when they come from Knockout Records you know that you're getting quality goods. This is yet another in their series of inexpensive comps, showcasing their releases. All previously released songs, but a bunch of great bands, most notably HARD SKIN, OXYMORON, BONECRUSHER, and DEADLINE. Other than the big hitters, STAGE BOTTLES, 4 PROMILLE, and BROILERS kick down some pretty great tuneage. None of the bands fall far from the Oi/street-punk tree, but there is none of that plodding shit Bruce Roehrs wets himself over. With only a couple of clunkers out of twenty-two tracks this is a worthy purchase. (TB)

(Knockout, www.knock-out.de)

V/A – "Last Monarcho Punk Austria" LP

A fine sampler of eight Austrian bands whose music varies quite a bit yet still holds a specific style. While KURWA APARATA has metallic guitar and gnarled vocals in a sort of BROKEN BONES-style of thrash, BÖSLINGE plays straight up classic Euro punk, which reminds me of Deutsche bands like WWK and TOXOPLASMA. They are definitely my favorites of the record. JUGEND DER APATHIE plays straightforward crust that I would liken to MAGGOT SLAYER OVERDRIVE. AMNESTIE ANTINATIONAL reminds me of a lot of Brazilian (and Brazilian-sounding) bands like FORÇA MACABRA and ARMEGEDOM. SOTATILA is really fucking chaotic and driving, especially the song "Peruspaskameininki." This is a good sampler for fans of late '80s and early '90s British crust bands and chaos punk. My only points of contention are the differences in recording quality and the master is a bit lo-fi, which is usual on most compilations. (WK)

(Crow Music, www.crowmusic.com)

V/A – "Messthetics #101: DIY 77-81 London I" CD

How rad is this? The Hyped To Death label has graduated from doing homemade CD-R comps to making well-packaged retrospective CDs from many great, long lost bands. This latest release is the first in what promises to be a series of "many, *many*" regional comps documenting the UK "DIY" scene of the late '70s and early '80s. The DIY scene was epitomized by jangly, melodic, minimalist, lo-fi, quasi-punk bands like TELEVISION PERSONALITES and DESPERATE BICYLES, who put out obscure limited pressings of their own records. This volume ignores those relatively well-known DIY bands and puts the magnifying glass to the London scene. It includes such greats as the SCISSOR FITS and the HOMOSEXUALS, and loads of awesome bands that I'd never heard of before like RICH & FAMOUS, TAKE IT, and THE DOOR AND THE WINDOW (who out-DIY the TELEVISION PERSONALITES with a drum-and-vocals-only cover of their hit, "Part-Time Punks"). The music on this comp ranges from folky pop to arty disco to dark new wave to fun punk rock and every combination thereof, and comes with well-researched liner notes on almost every band (some were obviously just too obscure to get any info on). I'm feeling totally inspired by this—in many ways this scene was way more "punk" than Punk, pushing the envelope of musical creativity and encouraging the idea that literally anyone can make music, while keeping it real on the most basic political level: Have total control of your art and work. Holy crap, I'm gonna go start yet another band!! (PC)

(Hyped to Death, PO Box 351, Westminster, MA 01473, www.hyped2death.com)

V/A – "Messthetics #102: DIY 78-81 London II" CD

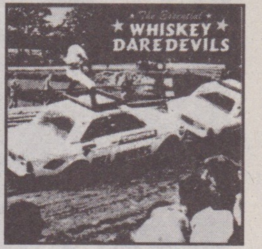
The latest broadside from the arty, DIY vessel in the Hyped To Death armada takes a second look at the any-one-can-do-it outpourings of the London area immediately following punk's year zero, 1977. Assorted SWELL MAPS hangers-on and WIRE wannabes get their day in the sun here, and while there are obvious reasons why some of these acts remained obscure, there are definitely instances where, for want of better promotion, or perhaps more self-confidence, we could be listening to the next (at the time) FALL or TELEVISION PERSONALITIES. Highlights this time around include fancy packaging pioneers THE TEA SET, THE VACANTS, STEVE TREATMENT, THE LINES, and LONDON PX. Gentlemen, start your engines... and...*collect!* (AM)

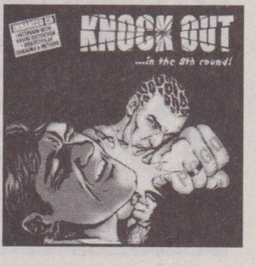
(Hyped To Death, PO Box 351, Westminster, MA 01473, www.hyped2death.com)

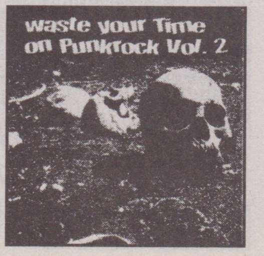
V/A – "Waste Your Time on Punkrock Vol. 2" CD

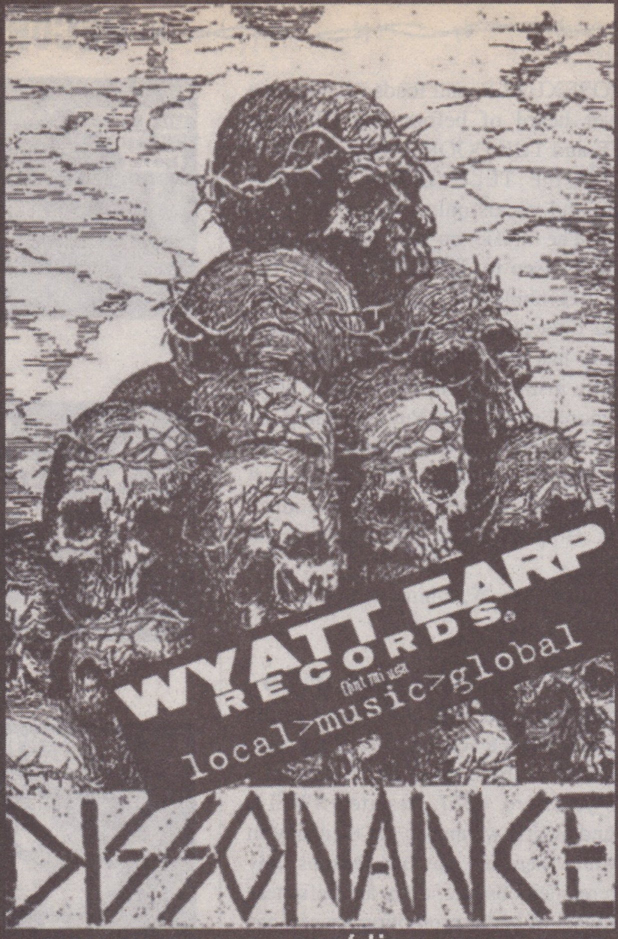
I have to say, by and large, I'm a big fan of German punk. Especially when the protagonists sing in their native tongue. There's something about the German language, though I barely understand a word of it, which just, I dunno, sounds pretty damn punk. And Germany, of course, has turned out so many classic bands—SLIME, DIE WALTER ELF, EA80, RAZZIA...I could go on and on. If you want to know what's cooking in the German underground today, then I guess this is a bit of one-stop shopping for you. A double CD with a whopping 56 bands showcasing 56 tracks. There are even tracks from Russian, Belarussian, Croatian, and Lithuanian groups, plus an Italian band (LOS FASTIDIOS) to mix it up a little. The styles featured here pretty much cut across the genres, from straightforward punk and hardcore, to emo, pop, toughguy, even a little ska and psychobilly. And it's all pretty damn good. There's not much point (nor room!) to list even a smattering of the band names here. I have heard of virtually none of them, but am very glad to have made the acquaintance of several, and suspect you might too. Best song title goes to FREIBOITER, with their "Antifascist Oi!" (RK)

(Black Python, www.black-python.net)









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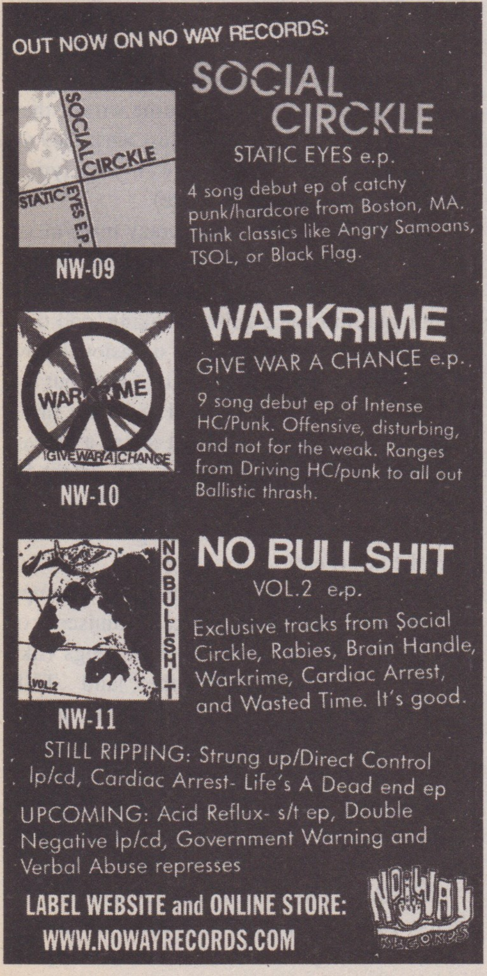
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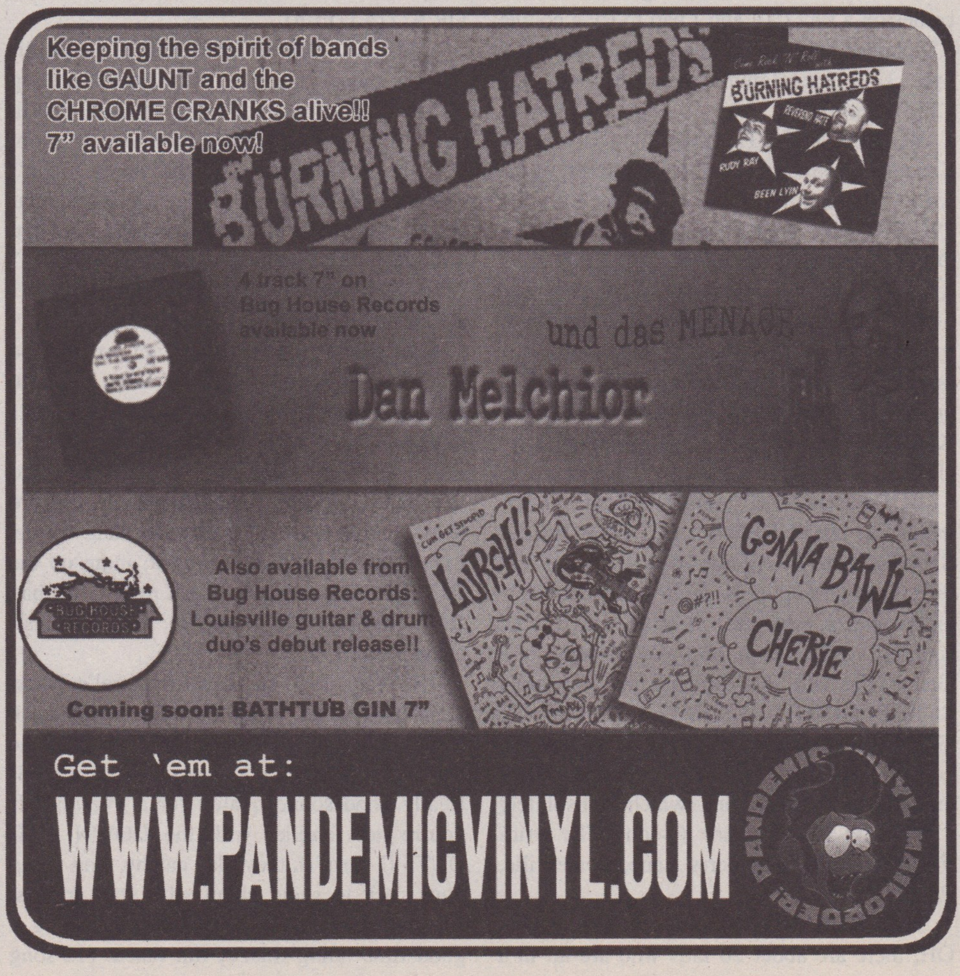
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DEMOS

Send demos and CD-Rs to: Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland, OR 97207. Please provide a postpaid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Peter Avery, Ariel Awesome, Justin Briggs, and Erin Yanke.

I don't know if you're allowed to call death grind quirky, but **ASRA** plays it that way. Samples, weird howling back up vocals, and drums that sound like someone is using triggers on pots and pans. Certain moments remind me of SPAZZ, but overall it's kind of the usual grind with a higher ration of slow metallic parts. (3-song CD, lyrics not included. 28-15 43rd Street, Astoria, NY 11103) (Ariel)

BABYBIRD plays energetic, fast, lo-fi punk rock. It's so lo-fi that I couldn't tell if the vocals on the first song were maybe some kind of horn instrument, or some cacophonous noise. In the second song, and beyond, you can tell they're vocals, but there isn't any stop to the high pitched screaming until the fourth song. Sounds good within the context of the music. Be forewarned, though, this demo comes on a tiny CD, and I had to try a couple CD players before I could enjoy this band. ($4 ppd. 3215 Joe Hammer St, Pittsburgh, PA 15213) (Erin)

BOMBED OUT, from the capital of Canada, introduce themselves to the rest of the world with this five-song CD of nondescript UK-influenced punk. It's got somewhat of a Dis feel and also somewhat of a street punk feel. The bouncy basslines carry this one home. I love the back cover. It's a circle A made out of two AK-47s with the circle made out of bananas. Makes me giggle. (5-song CD, no lyrics. 6541 Colony Sq., Ottawa, Ontario, K1C 3E3, Canada. bombed.out@hotmail.com) (Justin)

BOOKBURNER remind me of all the bands like DRUNKEN BOAT, BENT OUTTA SHAPE, and SNUGGLE rolled into one big dirty beer-soaked pop punk basement show extravaganza, with its collective heart placed squarely on its sleeve. Pop punk in more of a Gainesville, late-'80s Gilman kinda way, not a SCREECHING WEASEL, GROOVIE GOOLIES way. Gravel-throated vocals over catchy riffs. They definitely sound like they enjoy what they are doing, which is absolutely a necessity in this genre. (4-song CD, lyrics included. 2200 Strawberry Lane, Coatesville, PA 19320.) (Justin)

THE BOX SET is a concept. In Fairfield, OH, there are about 20 kids who are all in a bunch of bands and side projects and what not together. This is a comp of all that. So, there's some grindcore, some SCHLONG moments, acoustic stuff, poppiness, crusty stuff, and more. This may be the Magic Kingdom of comps, in the "there's something for everyone" sense, but maybe it's more like The Bins, cause you have to dig for what you like. Some strong scene unity there, that's for sure. ($6 ppd. 147 songs on 3 CDs, no lyrics included. 515 St. Thomas Ct, Fairfield, OH 45014) (Erin)

THE BUSTLING TOWNSHIPS have a twee pop sound mixed with lo-fi style to keep the songs janky and sweet. The songs are mostly vocally driven, crooning and/or heart-broke style, depending on the song, with keyboards or guitar adding to those melodies. (7 song CD, no lyrics included. 3527 SE Belmont, Portland, OR 97214.) (Erin)

CASUAL INDIFFERENCE plays political ska-punk complete with American flag swastika and horn section. Yeah dude, fourth wave (fifth wave?) ska is here, and it is not very much different than the third. I don't remember the names of all those mega popular ska bands in the '90s, but this sounds like that with the political content and DIY-ness of CITIZEN FISH. (13-song CD, lyrics included. 171 E. 6th Street, Claremont, CA 91711) (Ariel)

CHEMIST CAMP may not exactly be described as a punk band but what the hell. Their demo combines pop punk with early '80s goth pop. Their music sounds like some sort of mix between SILVER SCOOTER and BAUHAUS. They do dark pop songs that are heavy on the bass and monotone, sung vocals. Sure they may just be trying to jump on the INTERPOL bandwagon but it really isn't bad stuff. (6 song CD, no lyrics, www.chemistcamp.com) (Pete)

DOWN AND OUTS, Liverpool's finest punk rock gents, bring forth an eleven-track live CD recorded January 20th, 2006 at the Masque Theatre in, you guessed it, Liverpool! Really good sound quality for a live disc. If you're not familiar with the DOWN AND OUTS (I wasn't), they play catchy, sing-along punk rock to shout about with your friends. These lads really sound like their having a good time doing this. A fun listen. (12-song CD, no lyrics. www.myspace.com/downandouts) (Justin)

DOWN IN THE DUMPS mixes emo stylings and pop punk to remind me of when ol' Mike Kirsh was singing for PINHEAD GUNPOWDER. The songs are maybe more heart wrenching than that comparison. In general, they're a bit slower and more complicated, breaking occasionally into the "get wild" part. ($3 ppd. 4-song CD, lyrics included. 66 Ave. E. Holbrook, NY 11741) (Erin)

EVA BRAUN attempted to wow me with full color posters and slick promo sheets but really I'm not so easily wowed. In fact it just helps to confirm my suspicion that they are trying to be the next major label metal/rock band that likes to point out their punk roots while playing Ozzfest. Well I may be wrong but that is what their music sounds like. They play slick sounding metalcore with lots of wanking and vocals that move between singing and screaming, not unlike ISIS. Don't get me wrong, they are good at what they do, it's just what they do that is the problem. (5-song CD, with lyrics, evabraunxo@gmail.com) (Pete)

EXIT THE KING plays crazy math/metal that is exceedingly hard to dance to. Heavy guitars and spastic blast beats are mixed in with metal influence guitar wanking, odd timing, screaming vocals, and an occasional slow breakdown. Technically, it's great stuff but the better parts of the songs tend to be the more solid hardcore parts. The last song, a slower and heavier rocking wall of noise, might be their best. (5-song CD with lyrics, 708 w. 30th St, Austin, TX 78705, orphicstudios@gmail.com) (Pete)

THE FREAK OUTS play lo-fi swampy sounding catchy garage punk. Reminiscent of a mix between Summertime Fun songs (like "Here Comes The Summer")and THE CRAMPS (they do cover "Human Fly"). There's a lot of energy, humor, and action in the songs; good times for sure! (Send a postpaid envelope for a demo! 8-song CD, no lyrics included. 8222 S. Park, Tacoma, WA 98444) (Erin)

GERM ATTAK and **ICBM** have a split demo CD. ICBM does five short songs that sound like they should have been on Mystic

Records twenty some years ago. They mix the early-'80s LA punk sound with early BOLT THROWER. The recording isn't that great (it was done live and sounds like they recorded the vocals through a tube from 20 feet away) but the music is pretty good. GERM ATTAK plays seven songs of three-chord street punk. The songs are pretty sloppy and there are a lot of unnecessary guitar leads that aren't very good. Their songs aren't awful but they truly do start to sound all the same after a couple of tracks. (12 song CD, no lyrics, 92 Riel, Gatineau, Quebec, J8Y 5Y2, Canada, theamebix@yahoo.com) (Pete)

HEADED FOR DISASTER brings us 20 tracks of Swedish hardcore that falls somewhere between countrymates SKITKIDS and DS-13. This is pretty awesome! Fast mildly metallic HC with some ripping, competently played and well-placed guitar solos. The vocals are a bit distorted but it's perfect for their sound. There are two sets of songs on this CD—the first 13 from 2006 and the final 7 from 2005. Includes covers of POISON IDEA ("Gone for Good"), ELVIS PESLY (sic) ("Burning Love"), and RAW POWER ("State Oppression"). (20-song CD, no lyrics. Love Nystam, Diskusvagen 14, 12240 Enskede, Sweden. headedfordisaster@spray.se) (Justin)

INVADE are heavy mosh-a-riffic political madness from somewhere in the state of NY. Kinda reminds me of CATHARSIS. At least what I remember Catharsis sounding like. Some songs about questioning the life model we're supposed to follow, religious-chauvinist hypocrisy, wars over religion, among others. Well-played and well-recorded. (8-song CD, lyrics included. invadehc@gmail.com) (Justin)

LUCIEN is a mid-tempo hard rock influenced punk band. The hesher parts of the mix are intricate guitar work, and the vocals. The punk parts are the driving straight forwardness of the rest of the music, and the DIY attitude. It's sneakily catchy, and good! ($3 or trade. 10 song CD, no lyrics included. Astragnagataan 75, 165 52 Hasselby, Stockholm, Sweden) (Erin)

THE MOON KNIGHTS, from Anchorage Alaska, mixes up broken hearted pop songs with post punk abrasiveness, lo-fi experimentation, and that MAGNETIC FIELDS morose catchiness. Both male and female vocals, but not at the same time. I think this is great. ($5 ppd. 12 song Cassette, no lyrics included. c/o Volatile Rock, PO Box 11928, Portland, OR 97211.) (Erin)

MOTHER NIGHT kinda remind me of all the bands I saw in the early '90s that always seemed to come from Connecticut and play in central Massachusetts. The only name I can remember of any of them is FAULTLINE. Ha! Like that means anything to you readers. Slightly off-kilter, not-so-straightforward youth crew influenced hardcore. The vocals def have that CHAIN feel. There are not only some pretty crucial breakdowns popping up here and there but also some rather odd pretty parts. The recording quality of this one is also above average for a demo. (6-song CD, lyrics included. www.mothernight.net) (Justin)

PAPER DRAGONS plays mid tempo songs that are equal parts straightforward snotty rock, and that heartfelt early '90s more complex and thoughtful "grown up" pop. The vocals are half sung, half shouted and blend well with the sense of injustice expressed in the songs. ($2 ppd. 3 song CD, lyrics included. 3310 Beech Ave, Baltimore, MD 21211) (Erin)

PARLAMENTARISK SODOMI lash out at us with seven songs of incredibly well-played and well-recorded (miles above demo quality production values) grindcore. Wickedly fast blasting, low-ish growling vocal spew, some screechy vocals too, and a few ripping solos. At times they slow down to a more traditional Scandi-hardcore pace and they can hold their own there too. In fact I'd wish they stayed there, but it's not my band is it? Seriously, if you fancy yourself a grind fan, this is really well done. (7-song CD, lyrics included. S. Kittilsen, 0vre Bakklandet 7, 7013 Trondheim, Norway. parlamentarisk@hotmail.com) (Justin)

POTBOILER plays gritty, catchy punk that is pretty fucking charming. I can see this as the kind of band you find yourself singing along to even though you don't know the words, you just kinda get caught up in their enthusiasm. I mean, the demo comes with each member's home phone number, how much more approachable can you be? I would venture to say this band would fit in with No Idea's stable of bands. (7-song CD, lyrics included. potboiler@seductive.com) (Ariel)

THE PROBLEM TO THE SOLUTION OF AN ANALOG REVOLUTION takes speeches from Charles Bukowski, Che Guevara, Martin Luther King, Jr., Subcommandante Marcos, and Emma Goldman, and plays along to them on acoustic guitar or piano. The levels are inconsistent; for instance, it's almost impossible to hear Guevara over the guitar, or MLK over the piano. It's an interesting composition exercise, and a good idea. ($2 ppd. 6 song cassette, no lyrics. 4316 County Hills Blvd, Plant City, FL 33563) (Erin)

RELICS, I assume are from Chicago land as there's a picture of the Sears Tower on the cover, but maybe I'm wrong, This band reminds me of the old Portland band LIVING UNDER LIES. Heavy without being metallic, discordant, off-kilter hardcore. Also kinda has a '90s Canadian feel to it as well, maybe like ONE EYED GOD PROPHECY or something. I like. (4-song cassette, lyrics included. relicshc@gmail.com) (Justin)

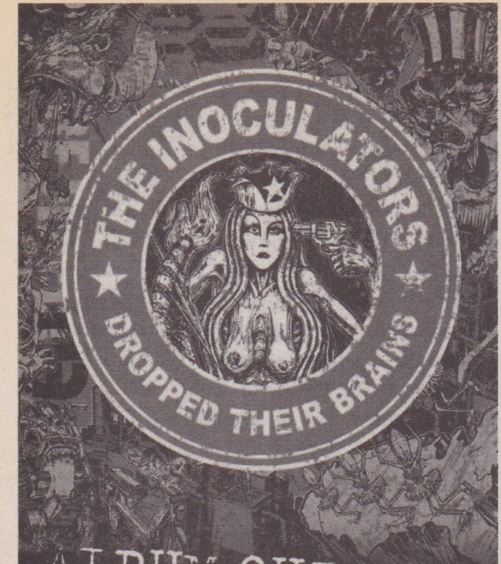
SHALLOW GRAVES plays five goth/punk songs on their demo CD. The music is part SIOUXSIE and part DEAD AND GONE. The songs are driven by the heavy bass and the solid, mid-tempo drumming. They get most of their goth feel from the eerie sounding keyboard and the dark guitar. The front man manages to fit the band well with his deep singing voice. It's good stuff all around. (5 song CD, no lyrics, 1231 Riverside Drive Apartment 1B, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401, theshallowgraves@yahoo.com) (Pete)

SOCIALCIDE sent in a seven-song demo entitled *Sick of the Pressure* that is better than most current bands records. No joke. Too bad it goes by in a blur. I'll just fucking play it again!! All killer, go-for-the-throat HC. They also cover "Jump Up" by their VA HC forefathers WHITE CROSS. One of my favorite songs! Woo hoo! Enough said. Order it fools. (7-song cassette, lyrics included. Zach: 816 Nugent Drive, Chesapeake, VA 23322) (Justin)

VERNIX let it rip with nine brutal tracks of burly, metallic, crusty hardcore. Male and female vocals trade off on the singing duties—one a deeper growl and one a higher register, but in no way a cookie monster/mosquito effect. These folks also definitely know how to play their respective instruments and honed their craft before letting their creative beast out into the world. Also, a surprisingly solid recording for a demo. Sadly this band has called it quits so this may be your only opportunity to check em out. Well done! ($4. 9-song cassette, lyrics included. Vernix, c/o Action House, 114 Spence St, Winnipeg, MB, R3M 0W1, Canada) (Justin)

WERFUKT from Lancaster, CA brings the world a five-song demo of metallic crossover thrash. Screaming guitar wankery and bile-hurling vokills rule over this with a studded arm gauntlet! If you are wearing a sleeveless light blue denim vest and your flipped up brim EXODUS mesh hat right now, then this is all for you. (5-song CD, no lyrics. Jeff Von Vomit, 2043 Baywood Ct, Apt # 182, Lancaster, CA. www.myspace.com/werfukt) (Justin)

WILD AND CRAZY KIDS plays simple and straight forward hardcore, while occasionally blast beating up everything around them. The vocals are shouted in anger and fun, a hard combination to convey, but I think I can hear both! The group back up vocals may add to that sense of good time hanging out togetherness, in the midst of the pit. Good work! (4-song CD, lyrics included. 37 Ewing Drive, Reisterstown, MD 21136) (Erin)



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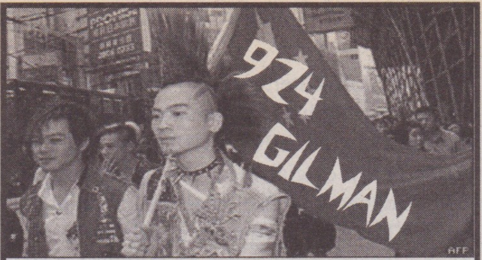

JANUARY

Friday 12
Arnocorps • Judgement Day
Cookie Mongoloid • Boweltones

Saturday 13
The Lucky Stiffs • Nothington

Friday 19
Monster Squad • Whiskey Rebels
Static Thought

Saturday 20
The Helm (WA) • Comadre

Friday 26 $7
Gravy Train • Groovie Ghoulies
Ninja Academy (L.A.) • Helper Monkeys
What The Kids Want (IN)

Saturday 27
30 Foot Fall (TX) • Fleshies
Go! (NY) • Abi Yo Yo's
Tulsa

FEBRUARY

Friday 02 $7
D.I. (L.A.) • Oppressed Logic
Deathtoll • Last Round Up (L.A.)
Second Opinion

Saturday 03
Ghoul • Fueled By Fire
Hatchet • Devastator
Nightmare Alley

Saturday 10
Outbreak (ME) • Hour of the Wolf (AZ)
Ambitions (CT) • Murder Practice

Friday 16
Plan 9 • All Time Highs
Everything Must Go! • Meat of Mankind (CAN)
Slightly Less Than Nothing (WA)

Saturday 17
Society's Parasites (L.A.) • Static Thought
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ZINES

Reviews by: Julia Booze (JB), Paul Curran (PC), Mikel Delgado (MD), Layla Gibbon (LG), Cassie Harwood (CH), Chris Hubbard (CS), Harald Hartmann (HH), Nick Mangel (NM), Jeff Mason (JM), Golnar Nikpour (GN), Casey Ress (CR), Andy Shoup (AS), Thera Webb (TW).

Send zines for review to: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, do you take trades?, size, copied or printed?, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, email address.

ABSOLUTELY ZIPPO #40 / $1 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 36 pgs
Ah, another fine issue of this venerable East Bay institution; *Absolutely Zippo* is always a pleasure, full of street politics, weird art, interviews and reviews by Eggplant, goofy comics, absolutely no computer layouts, and assorted other wacky punk randomness that is totally linked to the scene that spawned it. Issue #40 is the 40oz. issue of *Zippo*, and it features a cogent piece about abusive police, a weird vaguely psychedelic piece about drinking Sparks, reviews of a bunch of zines (including a longer form review of the most recent *Cometbus)*, among too many things to list. The unanswered interview questions for JRR Tallcan are priceless: "What food do you eat?," "You're probably wondering why I'm here?," "Why don't you keep a steady rhythm?" Great! (GN)
Robert Eggplant / PO Box 4985 / Berkeley, CA 94704

ALTERNATIVE PRESS REVIEW vol. 10 #2 / $5
8.5 x 11 – printed – 68 pgs
Much of this issue is given over to the terrible consequences of US foreign policy. Speeches by Noam Chomsky and Harold Pinter discuss US-sponsored terrorism in Central America in the 1980s and the most recent invasion of Iraq as links in the same chain. Some detailed reporting from Iraq describes recent atrocities. A piece on the yet-to-open museum planned at the site of the former World Trade Center in New York City reveals that only Norman Rockwell-esque art will be allowed, as opposed to pieces that could be perceived as providing context, or alluding to the fact that other people have died in terrorist attacks before and since 9/11/01. Other articles include a look at a predatory drug company marketing plan, Earth First's take on the opportunities available to activists as oil demand continues to exceed supply, and Derrick Jensen's re-write of *Star Wars* as a paean to liberal environmentalists. I heard him read this last one, and hated it, but found it pretty funny here. Overall, the quality of the pieces is uneven, but the pretty good ones outnumber the could've-been-better. There are a handful of ads, reviews, and comics. (JM)
AAL Press / PO Box 6245 / Arlington, VA 22206

BACK TO FRONT #2 / $7
8.5 x 11 – printed – 52 pgs
Back to Front is a zine from the UK that covers punk and social issues with a progressive/radical bent. Issue #2 features an interview with Report Suspicious Activity (Vic Bondi of Articles of Faith's new band), some editorials, a "Palestine-Israel Timeline," an article on Flat Earth Records, and a feature about the folly of religion, among other stuff. Worth a look, but probably not worth $7. (AS)
PO Box F / 67 Tannaghmore Rd / Ballynahinch / BT 24 8 NU / United Kingdom

BEAT MOTEL #6 / $3
8.25 x 5.75 – copied – 64 pgs
Here's another issue of *Beat Motel*. This is the perfect zine to read on the toilet. I don't mean that as an insult or anything at all, either. It caters to those of us with tiny attention spans—jumping from one thing to the next with every page or paragraph. So it's almost natural that this zine would evolve from a freshly printed and white-paged copy to another layer of the dog-eared and gummed up zine pile on your toilet tank. This issue has funny drunk stories, an article on the band Prolapse, tons of pictures, columns, reviews, and more. (CH)
71 Rectory Rd / Ipswich, Suffolk / IP2 8EQ / United Kingdom
crap@beatmotel.co.uk

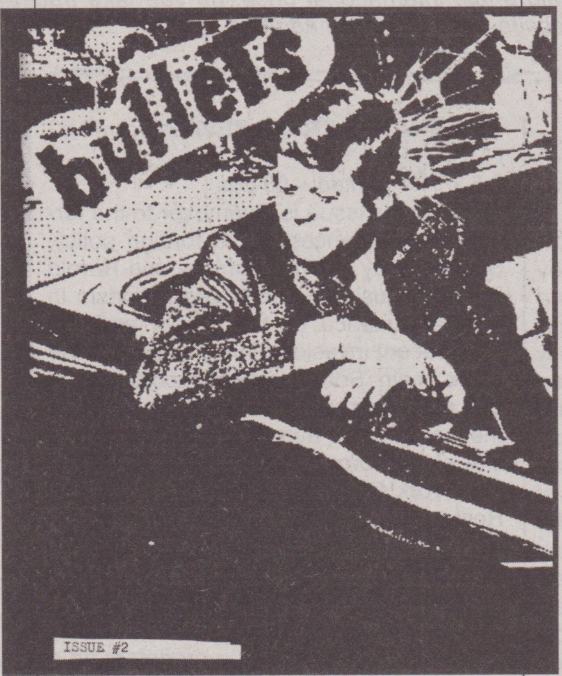
BIG HANDS #3 / $1
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 28 pgs
This issue is a comic zine with a really pretty hand-screened (I think?) cover. Inside the comic is about the allure of working the counter of a donut shop, getting the job, and getting fired. I think everyone daydreams about having a job like that, where you can give free food to your friends and listen to Sabbath at work at weird hours of the day. Sorta *Cometbus*-esque but this zine has its own thing going for it. Makes me wanna work on my own comics, man. (CH)
Aaron A. / 1104 Imperial Rd / Cary, NC 27511

BIG HANDS #4 / $1
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 32 pgs
I think the biggest problem with most perzines—the biggest problem except for bad writing, actually—is that too many of them are written by overly sentimental hacks who spend too much time waxing philosophical (despite their minimal life experience) instead of advancing any sort of plot, character development, or wit. Now, *Big*

Hands is definitely above average in terms of writing in the per-zine genre, but unfortunately it falls into many of the same tired clichés that plague the genre. Jezus, the whole thing is started off with a Jawbreaker quote, and the majority of the thirty-plus pages are filled with tales of taking Greyhound from city to city, listening to pop punk, being a dude, smoking weed with randoms, and thinking about stuff in a, "*that's heavy, maaaaan*" sort of way. The few pages where Aaron, the editor, discusses hanging out with his family in his travels serve as a sort of tease—when he's writing about non-clichéd experience with more fully fleshed characters, Aaron's knack for writing actually shines through. I should also note that the cover of this zine is very aesthetically pleasing, the sort of thing that might've prompted me to pick this up in our local zine shoppe Needles & Pens. Overall, this was dull dull dull, but if he gets over his penchant for emphasizing the banal and trite, Aaron could actually produce something great. (GN)
Aaron A. / 1104 Imperial Rd / Cary, NC 27511

BORN DEAD #8 / $2 or trade
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 42 pgs
I almost wrote "Bord Dead" as I was typing this, which would mean I had been killed by boredom reading it, but here I sit, still living. This zine has a lot of TV show reviews in it, about *The Price Is Right* and *Everybody Loves Raymond*. Also included is a review of Belfast, Ireland and a possibly fictitious story about almost shooting his mother. This is the kind of writer who enjoys heavily embellished language, and who tends to foreshadow so much you know what the ending is before you get there. He also reviews shows and metal and talks about politics, if you make it that far. (JB)
Mike Alexander / 929 Fleet Ave / Winnipeg, MB R3M1KY / Canada

BULLETS #2 / $1 or trade
8.5 x 7 – copied – 28 pgs
A cool, music-oriented zine from Ontario. The coverage and cut 'n' paste (from a computer printout) layout leans towards the crustier side of things, but there is a decent mix of general stuff from today's hardcore scene—good interviews with Instant Asshole, Deadfall, and several others, a piece on the Fucked Up record release show, and a bunch of record reviews. Other features include scene reports and creative writing. The author, Mike, is 17, and I noticed some amusing "rookie mistakes" here and there (calling Dropdead a straight edge vegan band, claiming Siege were from the late-'80s and played with the likes of Lärm, etc.), but at the same time his enthusiasm and attitude is refreshing. All in all it's a good read and shows promise for even better future issues. (CS)
Mike Arnott / 70 Tecumseh Crescent / Kitchener, ON N2B 2T4 / Canada
jump_off_a_building_13@hotmail.com



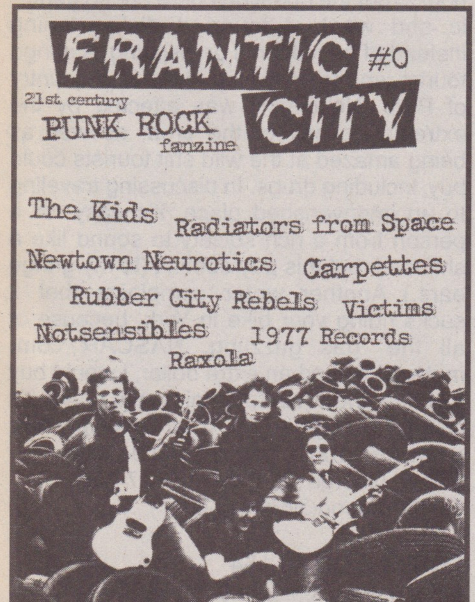
DIG IT! #38 / $7
11 x 8 – printed – 44 pgs – French
This absolutely one of the best fanzines published anywhere. Unfortunately, most Americans will never read it because it is written in French. But I have yet to see any fanzine that has a better understanding of rock and roll and it's history from the beginnings until today's current scene. This issue highlights the bands Radio Birdman, Black Merda, Deadly Snakes, Sweet, and Le Nombre. But more importantly *Dig It* has truly taken up the cause of George Tabb and his current travails of living in the shadow of the World Trade Center and the illnesses of those who were forced to breath the toxic dust of that tragedy. Of course *Dig It* also has plenty of record reviews, ads, new rock and roll gossip, and plenty of interesting photos. Finally, check out the *Dig It* radio show on the web every Thursday at 3:30 pm EST and 12:30PST. They play two and a half hours of great rock and roll. (HH)
Armadillo / 32 Rue Pharaon / 31000 Toulouse / France

DISTORT #11 / subscriptions $10/5 issues, back issues $1 each
8.5 x 11 – copied – 16 pgs
Fuck me, this zine is incredible! A cut 'n' paste DIY punk zine from Australia, *Distort* goes way past the scope and writing of most other zines that could be classified as such. The editor starts with a piece about a seventh century Sufi cult (?!) led by Hassan-I-Sabbah, all as an introduction the central theme of the fanzine, which is being "cult." He further makes his point: "Music fanatics became music 'fans.' 'Hardcore,' 'punk,' and 'rocknroll' degraded into meaninglessness due to an over-dilution of their gene pool with safe, generic garbage from mediocre minds with a passive consumer base to exploit. Now the word 'cult' does well to delineate fanatics from fans…This is cult hardcore punk rock 'n' roll." The editor, who we know as DX, is an exceptionally talented writer, and his personality comes through whether he is writing a story centered around a dead cat outside of a show, PDX's *Warning* fanzine (which he deems, rightfully so, as "true cult"), '60s teen punk, or current records (like Holy Shit, Gorilla Angreb, Outraged, and Brainwashed Youth, to give you an idea of the scope of this zine). His piece about Sweden's Regulations is about ten times more exciting and original than that band, and his interview with Australian punk greats the Thought Criminals is well done. The inclusion of some of Peter Laughner's writing from old *Creem* magazines is an added bonus and nice touch in terms of tracing DX's writing lineage, which honestly has more in common with Laughner and Lester Bangs than with the average hardcore fanzine editor. And trust me, I don't throw around that kind of praise lightly. In fact, I've never said it before. Highly, highly recommended. (GN)
DX / PO Box 239 / North Carlton VIC 3054 / Australia
distorttheworld@gmail.com

DOLL #233 / $?
7 x 10 – printed – 140 pgs – Japanese
What can I say, man, this is *DOLL* magazine, Japan's long-running thick and glossy publication devoted to punk and garage. This issue features interviews with the assho…I mean *people* behind *American Hardcore* the book and movie, but since I couldn't read the interview with Steven Blush I remained blissfully unaware of what bullshit he spouted off in it, presumably more shit about how Hüsker Dü were predatory homosexuals, Deep Wound was

boring, and lots of punk chicks gave him head in the '80s. Whatevz, man. There is also a "San Francisco Garage Scene" article, which features not one, or two, or three, but *four* Shane White bands (..........!!!!!!!!!!!....!). Awesome. Anyway, this magazine is most crucial for the photos and ads for the non-Japanese reader; I love poring over the record covers and distro lists on the back every issue of *DOLL* get my hands on. Hey, there's the new *MRR* comp! Awesome! And a new Stalin DVD? Gotta track that shit down for sure. (GN)
No 303 Aota Bldg / 3-1-9, Kita / Kohenji / Suginami-Ku Tokyo / Japan
hensyu@doll-mag.co.jp

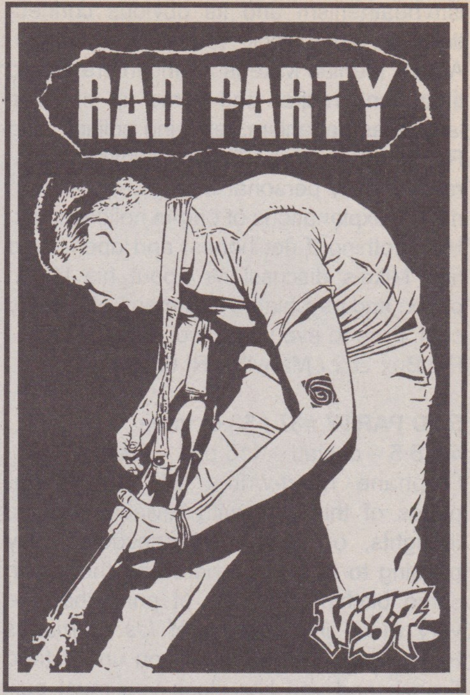
FRANTIC CITY #0 / Europe $3, US $5
6 x 8.5 – copied – 40 pgs
Frantic City is a "21st Century Punk Rock Fanzine" according to the cover, but as far as I can tell, all of the bands interviewed are from the '70s and '80s, which makes the subtitle a little confusing. This is a zine from France, which should help kill the rumour that there are no punx in France, only anarchists who dress like they're in the French Revolution and play accordion. Anyway, there's a ton of interviews (The Kids, Radiators from Space, Newtown Neurotics, Victims, and more) as well as a "make your own DIY Bloodstains across Frantic City" guide, with songs from all the bands that you should listen to. The English is a little shaky sometimes but, really, who the fuck cares? Good bands, good interviews, and a repeating question about who your "rock 'n' roll blood brothers" are. Plus it's international, so reading it'll make you seem like a real cosmopolitan kinda girl. Definitely worth the money.
Frantic City Entertainment Services / 31 Rue Arvede Barine / 1700 La Rochelle / France
franticcity.free.fr



GULLIBLE / BLURT #4 / #27 / $2
8.5 x 7 – copied – 48 pgs
Pretty interesting split zine here. *Gullible* is mainly personal stories, somewhat *Cometbus*-style, with some stuff about life being on tour, etc. *Blurt* is all about drinking stories, and some pretty funny ones at that. It probably tells you something about my sense of humor and level of mental development that I found the drinking stories much more engaging. Cool. (NM)
CT Terry / 807 Bergen St. 2R / Brooklyn, NY 11238

HEAD WOUND #18 / $3 or trade
11 x 8 – printed – 36 pgs
This is an interesting fanzine from England that includes a long interview with the bands Filthpact, and Whole In The Head. There are plenty of really cool record and fanzine reviews, but especially interesting of course is the cut and paste graphics of punk's yesteryear. This fanzine is totally DIY, and loaded with lots fun reading. (HH)
c/o Punktured / 145-149 Cardigan Road / LS6 1LJ / England
rachelheadwound@yahoo.co.uk

PLOPPY PANTS #5 / a pound, a dollar, or a euro postpaid, or trade
5 x 8.5 – copied – 20 pgs
Unlike many of you, I do not think saying "poop" is the height of wit. Further, crapping one's pants is just gross. So it is a testament to the brilliance of this Scottish visionary that this zine is so fucking sweet. First, it's a cut and paste, and focuses on punk thrash. Interviewed are Kamikazee, Step On It, and Steve of *Ripping Thrash* zine and label. These talks came out pretty decent. There are some short poems glorifying guess-what, some of which could be a Spazz songs (i.e., they're totally dumb, totally clever, and rhyme). Record reviews? "I couldn't be assed"! Advice column? Starring Mr. T! (He gives good advice.) Recipes? "You can't shit yourself on an empty stomach." It would be worth going to see Antisect (or Antiseen—I don't say this shit lightly) if one could score this zine at the show. (JM)
Roddy Ploppy Pants / Pillars Organic Farm / Falkland / Fife / KY15 7AD / Scotland



PUDD'NHEAD #3 / $3 US, $5 world, or trades w/ a "good letter"
8.5 x 11 – copied – 48 pgs
Pudd'nhead #3 is strictly interviews. Layout is "barebones"—just words on the paper—but Mike, the author, at least made the font himself. Anyway, the focus is really on the interviews themselves, and rightly so, since if you're just gonna do one thing, you should do it well. Mike's interviews are great. With no introductions, starting into each one with a clean slate was interesting, and I was never disappointed with the content when I finished. There are 16 conversations in all with punk folks from different walks of life in the Minneapolis area. At the end, there are two appendices to give the curious reader a better idea of who took part in this project. Well done and highly recommended! (CS)
Mike Pudd'nhead / PO Box 7458 / Minneapolis, MN 55407
wilk0214@umn.edu

THE PUNK PAGAN #7 & #8 / Free
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 35 pgs
I realize there has been recent controversy surrounding this zine in the pages of *MRR* (that was well worth the discussion and debate triggered, I think), but in all fairness I think the best thing I could do is review this zine based on the content of these issues here. I will let nothing deter me from doing my job: being a mediocre zine reviewer for the best punk zine ever. I've seen *The Punk Pagan* a couple of times before and found it a pretty interesting zine. I've always been fascinated by pagan-

ism/heathenism and its obvious connections to punk rock values and culture. Author Maniac Mike is an incarcerated old time punk rocker and sums up his zine largely as paganism, left wing politics, and Ramones worship. That's definitely accurate—mostly personal writings, mixed with rituals, explanations of pagan holidays, etc. He's nothing if not honest and open, I did find Mike's discussions about his life in prison and psychiatric treatment, etc. pretty cool. Free to everyone, too! (NM)
PO Box 282 / Manville, RI 02838

RAD PARTY #37 / $3 or trade
4 x 5.5 – copied – 116 pgs – French
Stephane hand-writes all 116-fucking-pages of this zine with reviews, stories, thoughts, opinions, and anecdotes only pausing to fill a page here and there with some bitchin' drawings of punx that are very much in the style of *los hermanos* Hernandez. Simply put, if you understand French and you like zines you must purchase *Rad Party* now. If not, it's a good excuse to start learning. (PC)
Stephane Delevacque / 9 Bis Grande Rue Charles De Gaulle / 92 600 Asnieres Sur Seine / France
burninghopes@hotmail.fr

THE RAG #1 / Europe $3.50, US $5
8.5 x 12 – printed – 46 pgs
This is a new anarcha-feminist zine, from Dublin! Really nicely put together with well thought out, interesting articles. The people involved with *The Rag* have a lot of insight and radical ideas. This is pretty accessible to readers from places besides Dublin as well. I really enjoyed reading the articles about midwifery, unionizing sex workers, rape culture, and sexual violence in activist communities. I'm excited about reading the next issue. (Bonus points for being a radical anarcha-feminist zine with only one recipe—for scones—and no references to Pippi Longstocking.) (TW)
PO Box 10785 / Dublin 1 / Ireland
ragdublin@riseup.net
www.ragdublin.org

RAUMSCHIFF WUCHERPREIS! #20 / $4
11 x 8 – printed – 76 pgs – German
This fanzine consists of some interviews, including the bands Deadline, OHL, Stomper 98, and Tsunami. There is an article and review of the Rock My Ass Punk Festival, but mostly this fanzine features pages and pages of record reviews and ads, including the scumfuck catalogue for purchasing your favorite band's record. (HH)
www.scumfuck.de

RAZORCAKE #35 / $4
8.5 x 11 – printed – 116 pgs
Yet another respectable issue of *Razorcake*, with all your favorite (and least favorite) columnists, thoughtful (and silly) interviews—this issue has Billy Childish, the Feelers, Larry from In The Red Records, and best of all, cover-nerds Blöödhag—and, of course, reviews and ads a-plenty. Dude, this is the second-best volunteer-run, regularly published, widely distributed punk rock fanzine in the country, so get on the bandwagon now. (PC)
PO Box 42129 / Los Angeles, CA 42129
www.razorcake.org

ROCK HARDI #35 / $8
8 x 6 – printed – 60 pgs – French
Wow, definitely a fanzine to pick up if one can read French, or is interested in the French scene. This issue leads off with an excellent interview with the French band the Dogs who were part of the first wave of punk. Check out the Dogs album "Walking Shadows" from 1980, a masterpiece of punk rock in the same vein as the Wipers, or Television. Also included in this fanzine are interviews with the Zoomen from Toulouse and the band Stalingrad. There are also plenty of record reviews, and punk gossip, but the highlight is the CD sampler featuring six really cool French punk bands including the Zoomen, Mr. Bonz, the Bobby Traps, Stalingrad, Good Time Charlies, and the Mean Things. (HH)
3 Rue Beausoleil / 63100 Clermond-Ferrand / France
www.rockhardi.com

RURAL RAGE #1 / $2
8.5 x 5.5 – printed – 28 pgs
Being a writer, or at least possessing some level of literacy, should be the first requirement when it comes to writing a zine. Sadly, zine creators don't always place a premium on the ability to write. The most interesting subject matter can be absolutely unreadable if the writer can't construct words in a way that can be read. Fortunately for Dub Emcee, the creator of *Rural Rage,* he can write. The subjects he tackles, ranging from workplace insurgency, The Young Lords, and growing up in Iowa to simple but honest rants about life and its disappointments are written with the urgency and passion that is necessary, but often absent in zines. With that passion also comes areas that could be improved upon; the entire zine is handwritten, but readable. Margins however would be a marked improvement. Likewise, a little editing before printing would make future issues flow better. Some of the writing, such as the "pirate guy" story veer way off subject and completely lose their thread. Hopefully, he can find a way to maintain the intensity and honesty while also putting out something that comes together a little more cohesively. Overall though, a remarkable first issue that with some tweaking could really be a great zine in future issues. Keep it going! (CR)
Dub Emcee / 302 N. 3rd Street / Bellevue, IA 52301
dead_end_dub_c@hotmail.com

SORRY TREES #5 / $1 or trade
8.5 x 11 – copied – 20 pgs
The price is cheap, and the quality nearly makes it worthwhile. Highlights include the primer on so-called "free trade," reprinted from a Merkit record; the band is interviewed as well. Also interviewed is William Blum. This guy has written some important books, but the questions here are so generic and weak, I found it disheartening instead of educational or inspiring. A gringo tourist reports on his trip to the backcountry of Peru. He clearly was affected by the extreme poverty of the area, as well as being amazed at the wild shit tourists could buy, including drugs. In discussing traveling to an impoverished place, it's easy for a person from a rich society to sound like a shithead, but this guy doesn't (to my gringo ears.) Another writer complains that it sucks riding your bike in York, because of all the "gas guzzling, NASCAR commuters." If I had an extra dollar, I would buy this at a show just to be nice, but really, it's still got a ways to go. It is, however, now printed on 100% recycled paper. (JM)
818 S. George St. / York, PA 17403
pointbforgood@hotmail.com

SQUIRRELLY #1 / $4
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 40 pgs
Squirrelly is a really cool collection of drawings and comics. The only was I could

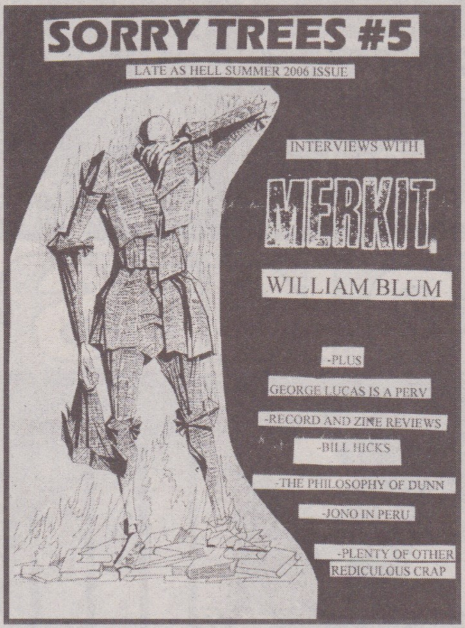
explain the look of these drawings is it's like the weird old kitschy figurines cluttering my Grandma's house and garden. I love it! I love these comics cause they are sorta crazy and bizarre and also pretty honest, and I know that is sorta vague but trust me, it's great. This zine draws a parallel between life and living, and lobsters cooking slowly in a pot. The extra dollar in the price is for shipping. (CH)
Sue Cargill / 5746 N. Kenmore #210 / Chicago, IL 60660-4500
awkwardphobic@yahoo.com

STATE LINES AND TIME ZONES / $2 or trade
4.25 x 7 – copied – 32 pgs
Zine collaboration of the personal/emo sort from the creators of *Brainscan* and *Pressed Between the Pages*. Each editor writes four short stories correlating to the different seasons. I may have to use emo multiple times in this review, as that is the best word to describe the brief, disjointed writings within. Emo. (MD)
Alex Wrekk / 809 N. Shaver St / Portland, OR 97227
www.fallofautumn.com

STREET ART WORKERS LAND & GLOBALIZATION NEWSPAPER #1 / $6
17 x 32 – printed – 14 pgs
The better parts of *Adbusters* mixed with Seth Tobocman, varying political themes such as ecological destruction, housing and womens' rights to farmworkers' issues and Native Americans. Some of the posters are woodcuts and some obviously done on the computer, there is a nice balance here with the posters obviously intended to blend in with your average advertisement or bill posting, and those meant to stick out more as handmade art. They are intended to be pasted all over town along with the rest of the visual detritus we suffer through. This project is really inspiring, street art is my favorite kind. I can see myself trudging along the street in a bad mood, if I saw a poster like one of these I would feel a lot better. They ask for help distributing the newspaper and art contribution. (JB)
www.streetartworkers.org / streetartworkers@gmail.com

TREBLE HIGH, TALENT LOW #1 / $1
7 x 8.5 – copied – 20 pgs
I love me a nice cut-n-paste zine with some heart and personality. Brandon does a swell job here with great layouts, some good and bad columns, articles and reviews, and the high point, a couple of really cool interviews with 9 Shocks Terror and Zach of Not Very Nice Tapes (and fanzine). Also, this has the best poem I've read in a zine in ages. I won't give it away, but it starts with the line "I am no feeble e.e. cummings." A good first issue, with plenty of room to grow. (PC)
Brandon Gaffney (be sure to put his name on top, he says) / 6 Stewart Ave, / Glens Falls, NY 12801
brandon_gaffney@yahoo.com

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #81 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 48 pgs
Show reviews, show reviews, show reviews! Do you enjoy reading show reviews? How about reviews of shows that took place in Missouri, and featured bands that probably weren't punk? Errrrr...yeah. That's pretty much it, along with an interview with MDC. I do have a soft spot in my heart for MDC, but the interview featured here was not enough to redeem this zine. This is issue #81, which should tell you something, although I'm not really sure what. (AS)
PO Box 1444 / Columbia, MO 65205



TRUST #120 / 2.50 euros
8.5 x 11.5 – printed – 68 pgs – German
Trust, Germany's long-running punk/hardcore/underground zine—hopefully you're already quite familiar with it. If you can read German, this should be a no-brainer. Coverage in this issue includes interviews with Mönster, Leftöver Crack, and Kurhaus, as well as some outside the hardcore realm like Chaoze One, the Gossip, and Carla Bozulich, plus a wealth of reviews (music and otherwise), columns, photos, and show listings. Well put-together with a ton of content—check it out! (CS)
Postfach 11 07 62 / 28087 Bremen / Germany
www.trust-zine.de

TURNING THE TIDE vol.19 #6 / free
11 x 17 – printed – 8 pgs
The writing in this paper rivals *Slug and Lettuce*, but is a little bigger. It is pretty dense, but if you can focus your eyes, you will be rewarded with a plethora of coverage of anti-racist action across the land. One of the best films I saw this year is called *Sir, No Sir!*, a documentary about GI resistance to the Vietnam War. This paper discusses current GI resistance to the war in Iraq with a list of specific people, what they did, whether they applied for Conscientious Objector status, whether they got dishonorable discharge, or whether they are imprisoned for resisting. It is clear to me that the Vietnam War ended as a result of protest within the army and back home, so it would be good to support these folks. There is also a discussion of John Brown written by Mumia Abu Jamal, regarding the anti-slavery actions made in the Civil War, but primarily how history has been rewritten to see him as madman for standing up for the rights of blacks. There is a host of other topics as well covering the gamut of anti-imperialism. (JB)
ARA / PO Box 1055 / Culver City, CA 90232

WORK STORIES #1 / $2
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 36 pgs
I cringe when a zine attempts to speak for the working people. For punks and zinesters, class is often a transitory state, reflective not only of present status, but also of past privileges provided by the benefits of education, access, and location. Being a college dropout working at a crappy temp job is not a qualification for presenting the experiences of the working poor any more than going on tour and living out of a van provides an insight into the world of vehicular habitation. Jesse, in his inaugural issue of *Work Stories*, avoids the pitfalls of using his experiences of working in a crappy construction job, to act as a voice for working people. His stories, often funny and insightful, are written about his experiences and his relationship to work and his co-workers rather than the experiences and motivations of his co-workers. The difference is subtle but crucial, he doesn't pretend to tell anyone's story but his own, and at that he succeeds. He does a great job of using his experiences to illustrate larger issues about class and labor in a personal and approachable manner. I can't get behind the Billy Joel lyrics reprinted within, but the anecdotes that range from hanging sheet rock, management nit-picking, and scrap iron, to dirty jokes and workplace safety are interesting and intelligent. It's refreshing to see someone write about work and class without throwing in tired IWW clichés, dangerous assumptions, and Marxist idealism. Great work with a tricky subject. (CR)
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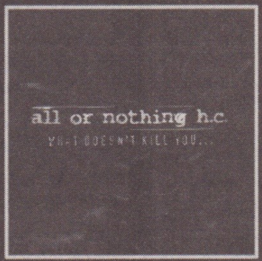

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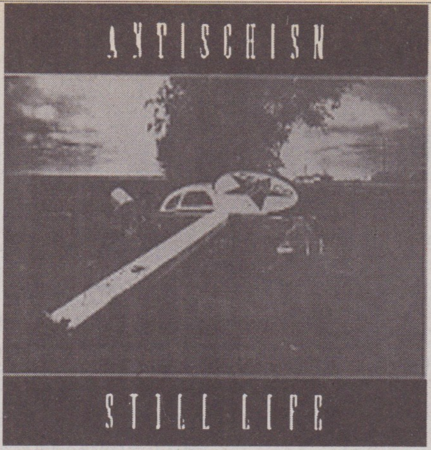

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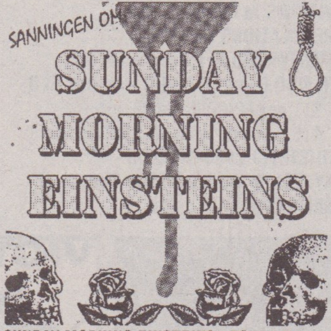

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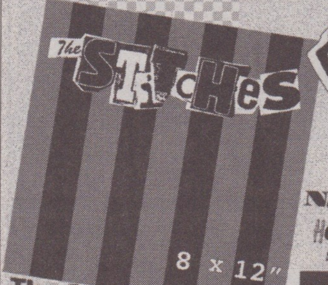

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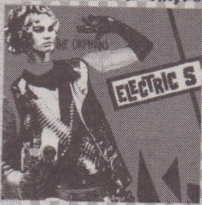

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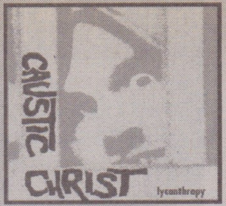

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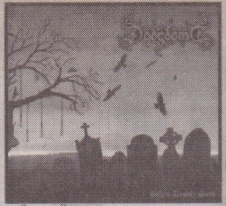
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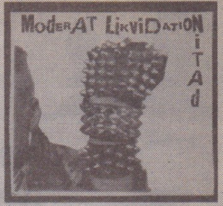

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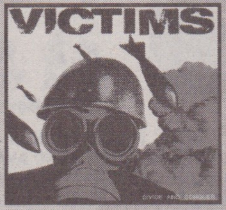

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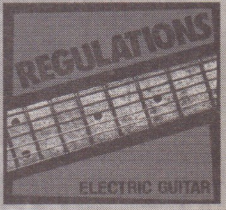

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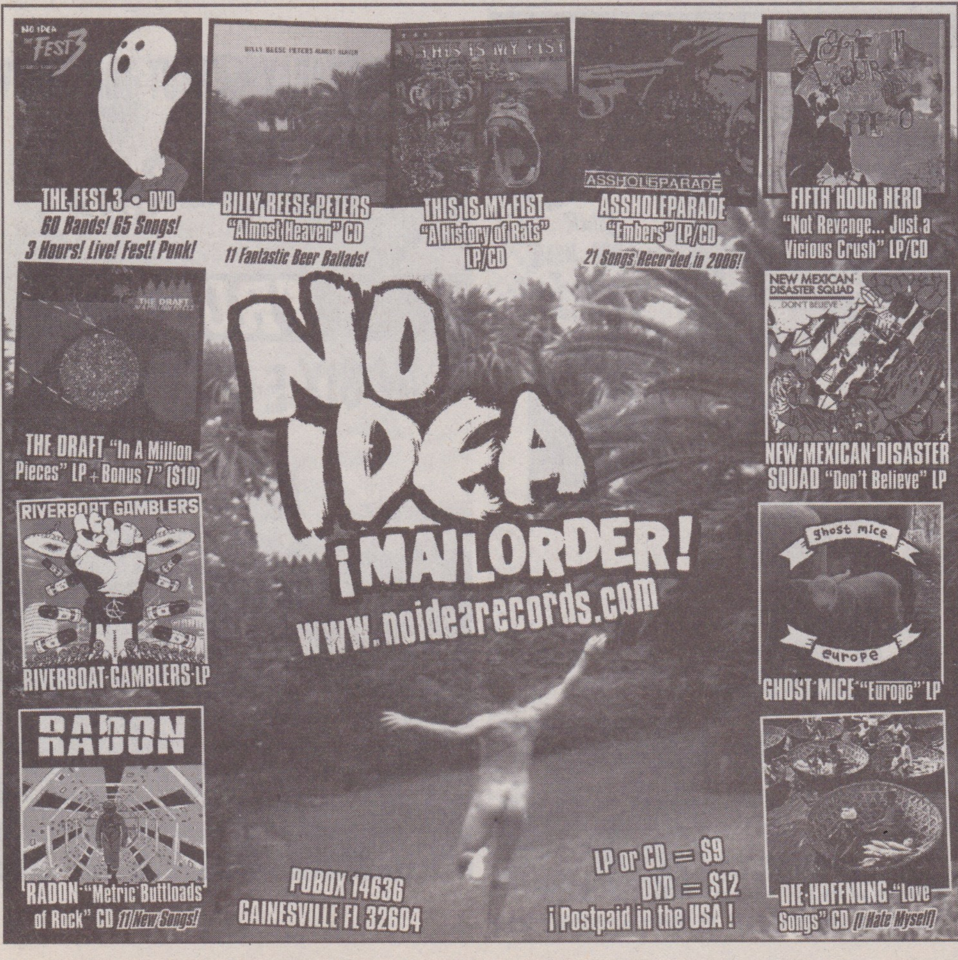

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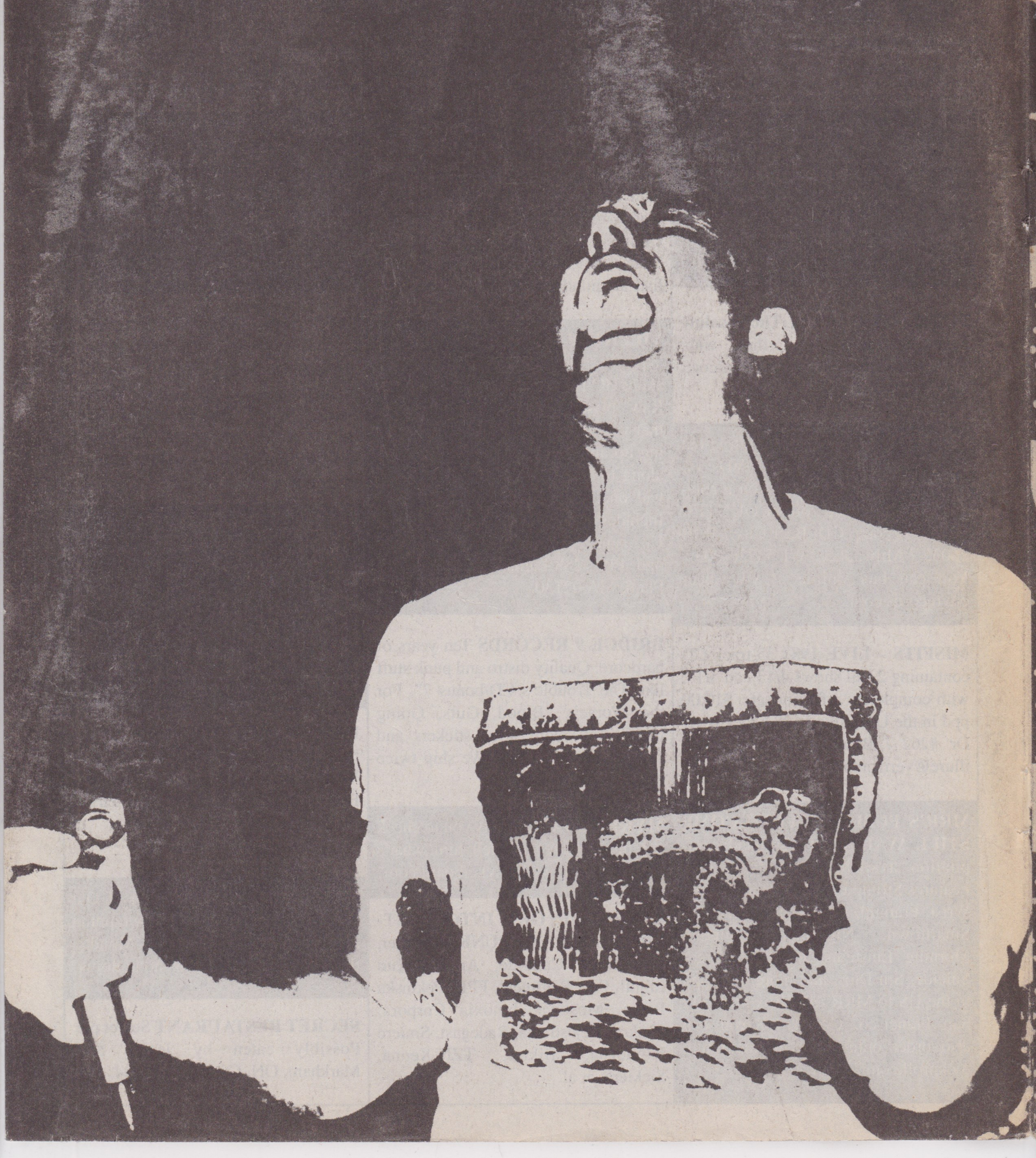
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